# MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

APRIL 2018 $4.99 ISSUE 419

## NEVER MIND THE COMPUTERS

## HERE'S THE ALL CUT'N'PASTE ISSUE

THE COWS · NECK CHOP · PROTOCOL · RATA NEGRA

WOOLEN MEN · FORCED ORDER · ILLYA · CLOUD RAT

FINNISH KBD · KATASTROF · SCORE · DOTS · LEMURIA

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# TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten (or so) things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to our PO Box. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

## GRACE AMBROSE

*Thrilled, Living.*

## MATT BADENHOP

ENAMORADOS – La Verdad 12"
ANTIMOB / WITHOUT MERCY – split EP
WARTZ CS / SADO BABIES CS
MOSKWA – Wiem EP
TRIAL BY FIRE – 1982 LP
V/A – O Começo Do Fim Do Mundo 2xLP
AUSMUTEANTS / PUFF – split EP
MAAILMANLOPPU – 45
DEUTER – Demos 1981–1984 LP

## MITCH CARDWELL

RULER – Tiger EP
THE TRASHIES – The Octagon LP
THIS KIND OF PUNISHMENT – LP
SIMPLY SAUCER – 2xLP
SHARK TOYS – Labyrinths LP
BETA BOYS – 45
HEAVY LIDS – Final Days LP
VERY MENTAL – 45
V/A – SCRAP! LP

## ROBERT COLLINS

DEAD HERO – La Vida Continua LP
ASYLUM – Modern Hysteria LP
FLQ – War Measures LP
V/A – SCRAP! LP
S-21 – EP
PROVOKE – live
GOVERNESS – LP
ANTIMOB / WITHOUT MERCY – split EP
LEFT CROSS – Chaos Ascension LP
THE GUESTS – Red Scare LP

## JOAN DETORO

S-21– Operation Menu EP
FLQ – War Measures LP
MISILISKI – Kioku No Kage EP
DEAD HERO – La Vida Continua LP
PARANOIA – CS
LIFE FUCKER – Z LP
SIMPLY SAUCER – 2xLP
V/A – O Começo Do Fim Do Mundo 2xLP
POBREZA MENTAL– CS

## MIRANDA FISHER

SIMPLY SAUCER – 2xLP
BETA BOYS – 45
FLQ – War Measures LP
RULER – Tiger EP
AUSMUTEANTS / PUFF – split EP
AMERICAN BREAKFAST – EP
THIS KIND OF PUNISHMENT – LP
HEAVY LIDS – Final Days LP
SHARK TOYS – Labyrinths LP
DEAD HERO – La Vida Continua LP

## LAYLA GIBBON

SHARK TOYS – Labyrinths LP
THIS KIND OF PUNISHMENT – LP
SUSAN – TV Girls EP
V/A – O Começo Do Fim Do Mundo 2xLP
VERY MENTAL – 45
GOVERNESS – LP
BETA BOYS – 45
SIMPLY SAUCER – 2xLP
THE TRASHIES – The Octagon LP
APATIA – LP

### GREG HARVESTER

- MISILISKI – Kioku No Kage EP
- COLD LEATHER – Past Remedy EP
- THE TRASHIES – The Octagon LP
- S-21– Operation Menu EP
- MIND SPIDERS – Furies LP
- SIX BREW BANTHA – Blight LP
- SLOPERS – 10"
- MAAILMANLOPPU – 45
- NO BABIES - live
- DRAMA - live

### KENNY KAOS

- AUTOGRAMM – 45
- DEE CRACKS & NIKKI
- CORVETTE – 45
- BIG BILL – Stand By Your Bill LP
- THE WIRMS – EP
- RULER – Tiger EP
- AMERICAN BREAKFAST – EP
- SUSAN – TV Girls EP
- MODERN LOVE – Tross Alt LP
- MIND SPIDERS – Furies LP
- PINK LINCOLNS – Headache LP

### CAROLYN KEDDY

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- AUSMUTEANTS / PUFF – split EP
- BETA BOYS – 45
- S-21 – Operation Menu EP
- VERY MENTAL – 45
- AMERICAN BREAKFAST – EP
- HEAVY LIDS – Final Days LP
- SUSAN – TV Girls EP
- SIMPLY SAUCER – 2xLP
- Ex Libris film

### RAY LUJAN

- BLACK ADIDAS – LP
- THE GUESTS – Red Scare LP
- JETZ – Cracked Up LP
- MIND SPIDERS – Furies LP
- MODERN LOVE – Tross Alt LP
- NOVEMBER ONOTO BAND – EP
- SONGS FOR SNAKES – LP
- SUSAN – TV Girls EP
- VIBRATORS – CD
- LILLINGTONS – live
- THE FLESH EATERS – live

### MARISSA MAGIC

*America's only Marissa*

### ROTTEN RON READY

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- THE CHARLEY FEW – LP
- V/A – O Começo Do Fim Do Mundo 2xLP
- BETA BOYS – 45
- FLQ – War Measures LP
- KLAZO – Embarrassed Of Living LP
- LANGUID – Oblivion EP
- S-21– Operation Menu EP
- DEAD HERO – La Vida Continua LP
- LEFT CROSS – Chaos Ascension LP

### FRED SCHRUNK

- S-21– Operation Menu EP
- MAAILMANLOPPU – 45
- MOSKWA – Wiem EP
- BETA BOYS – 45
- CHILLER – LP
- MIND SPIDERS – Furies LP
- ENAMORADOS – La Verdad 12"
- VERY MENTAL – 45
- INSTITUTE – Subordination LP

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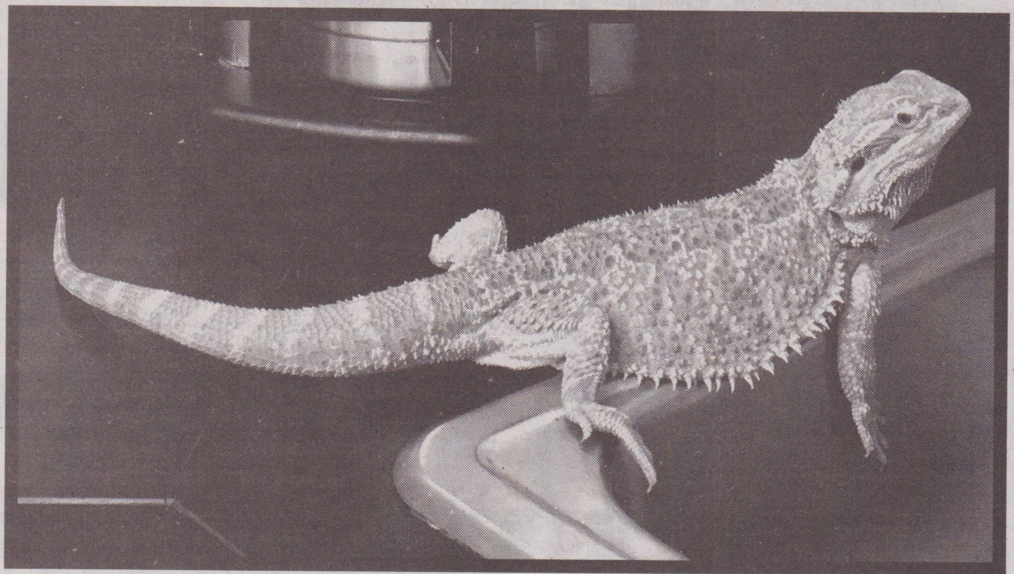
# ISSUE #419



Sunday, *MRR's* only shitworker.
Photo by Laura Haubrich

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-CARL

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# LETTERS

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I'm not at all surprised that Turbo Jorgensen doesn't "care to spend much time defending Combat 84." He endorses shitty right-wing music for a (purportedly? formerly?) left-wing publication, and therefore must resort to chickenshit non-opinions so as not to alienate the magazine's other core audiences too much. Well, I guess I'm what the Stormfront WPWW trolls call a PC Fag—when I read repeated over-zealous assertions of so-called "patriotism" coming from alienated, angry White people who do not disavow their racist peers, I see it for what it is—racist, White nationalist bullshit. I imagine that the editorial powers-that-be at *MRR* continue to promote such content because an unfortunately large percentage of their readership supports it. I'm reminded of an interview with Oxymoron, years ago, in which they were asked about their neo-Nazi audience, and they totally ducked the question by simply saying they were an apolitical band. I remember being really disappointed by that at the time. They were too chickenshit to take a stand one way or the other. I understand that interests are diverse and this is a world of contradiction, etc., but it's better for everybody if we work to become aware of these things and then use our ideas positively, not for the promotion of misguided violence and hatred. I have plenty of streetpunk / Oi! in my collection, but even when I throw on an old, generally thought to be innocuous Cock Sparrer record these days, I find myself more and more aware that I'm hearing plenty of nationalistic and violent themes that I do not support at all. We make choices when we consume music, and we are what we eat, so to speak. If you're jamming Skrewdriver or whatever when you're feeling angry, even if "it's just the first record" or you "don't listen to the lyrics" (yeah right) that shit is affecting you (and therefore our world) negatively, and you are working against positive core human interests. If you support bands that cater to and are supported practically exclusively by regressive, hateful audiences, then you become part of that crowd. Is that what you want? That is not my punk rock. I would much rather sit by myself, listen to ambient room sounds and the ticking of my clocks, and sing "This Land is Your Land" than engage in any part of some hateful fantasy boot-party jerk-off. This might all come off as pretty dour, but the "Still the New Breed" column would be *waaay* more up my alley if it had more of the politics, smarts, and humanity of bands like Oi Polloi and the Pist rather than the sketchy regressive shit from overly prideful drunken right-wing morons that it appears to favor.

Sincerely yours,
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*Hello Matthew! I quoted an innocuous Combat 84 song, "Poseur," which calls out Steve Strange of Visage and the New Romantic subculture. I then quoted the Visage song, "Fade to Grey." Partly because I think it echoes the dichotomy of punk and Oi! scenes today and partly because bands of the early '80s calling out poseurs and pretenders is interesting to me. (See: "White Punks on Hope" or "Suburban Rebels.") Furthermore, the epigraph prior to the title of my column is most times unrelated to the intro and subsequent reviews. It's an inside joke that is meant to be an oafish parody of Lefty Hooligan's erudite style (and sometimes Oi! lyrics are tuff and cool.) As far as my resorting to "chickenshit non-opinions" as to why I don't consider Combat 84 to be a racist, WP, or fascist band, I feel I gave adequate reasoning. I recommend rereading my previous response to Mr. Aveyard regarding Combat 84 in issue # 417 for further clarification.*

*Addressing the rest of your letter: I am grossly flattered that you think the few right-wing Oi! records I review could taint the entire body of* MRR *(I say that about Layla Gibbon's reviews every month!) But I must disagree. Even a hasty skim of any recent issue will show you* Maximum *staunchly (prosaically, conventionally, dryly, dully) flies the flag of general punk-leftism. Duh. And if you've read my column, you've seen I am critical of many of the records I review, regardless of political orientation. When I find something idiotic or that I think is poorly expressed I comment on it. Moreover, I have written many positive words about RASH—Red & Anarchist Skin Head [sic]—bands. But my column's focus isn't my political opinions. It is expressly a genre-specific music column. And you seem to enjoy politics, not music. So it's no wonder you find fault with "Still the New Breed." That doesn't mean I think you're a PC nerd (who may or may not listen to Woody Guthrie with a bunch of clocks...instead of Sparrer?!), but I do think you're myopic. Your suggestion I limit my coverage to bands like Oi Polloi and the Pist says as much. It isn't "dour," it's boring. (The Pist haven't released new music in over twenty years!)*

*Ug! Blorf! My column is aimed at people who are interested in Oi! and skinhead music, and people who enjoy humorous and hyperbolic writing. If you read "Still the New Breed" for the Oi! reviews or to chuckle at me making an ass of myself, I've done my "job" (we get paid with a single issue). I don't aim to change anyone's opinion regarding the punk ethos vs. punk music debate (cue whoopee cushion.) If you'd like to see a RASH-only Oi! column, or an Oi! column that weaves in the author's personal political musings, I suggest you get to writing. I got this "job" (sometimes they forget to send you your copy) because no one was talking about Oi! in* MRR *anymore and I wrote in and complained. I was told to submit a "Guest Column" and then was asked to return as a regular columnist. (NBD, my first AOL screen name was DIY0RD1E.)*

*In general, your letter adds to a larger—and looming—conversation concerning Oi!'s place in* MRR. *It's given me more to think on. Thanks for writing in.*

—Turbo! Jorgensen
AmericanBootGang@Gmail.com

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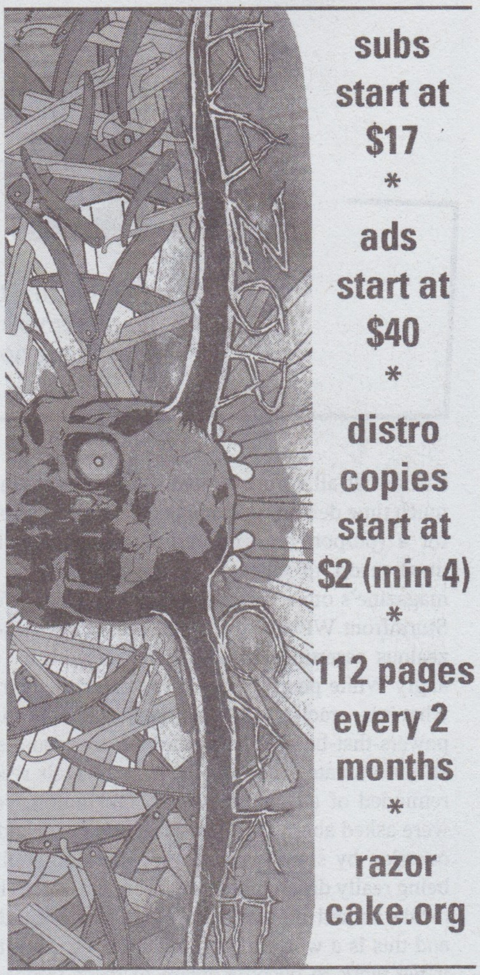
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SLOPE
RECORDS

# COLUMNS

I don't think that I can really get around mentioning Mark E. Smith's passing a few weeks ago, given that I stole the title for this column from a FALL song and that my feelings for that band are well-known enough that I had no fewer than five people send me messages right after the news hit, all saying something to the effect of "I immediately thought of you." I've always openly admitted that there's no way that I'd have learned how to play or even think about music in the way that I do now if it hadn't been for having my entire consciousness flipped by *Perverted By Language* and *Live at the Witch Trials* and countless other FALL records, which helped me come to terms with the fact that it's okay to write a song that's just one single part repeated over and over again for its whole duration, and that it's perfectly acceptable to get that same song out of the bare minimum number of notes (four is good, three can be even better), and that it doesn't matter that you're completely self-taught and that all of your "technique" is guided by invented patterns rather than any sort of concrete theory.

But Mark E. Smith was also problematic as hell, particularly in regards to the verbal and physical abuse that he notoriously inflicted upon his bandmates, including a handful of his partners. Would I be as willing to listen to the FALL if they were a newly formed basement-dwelling punk group fronted by some asshole dude, instead of the band that essentially wrote the musical textbook that seemingly every DIY post-punk band from the past forty years has referenced at one point or another? Is it possible to acknowledge someone as being a brilliant artist while also recognizing that they're an unequivocally shitty person? I was actually incredibly comforted to see so many of my friends grappling with that same dilemma as they spoke of how important Mark's work in the FALL had been to them, because it's something that's weighed heavily on my mind for years, thinking back to every time I've pulled out "City Hobgoblins" or "Rowche Rumble" at one of my DJ nights, or when my band was recently crashing through a cover of "Big New Prinz," or when I read Brix Smith Start's *The Rise, The Fall, and The Rise* and Steve Hanley's *The Big Midweek*, both of which chronicled the complex persona of Mark E. Smith in bluntly honest detail. When a co-worker friend dropped into my office on the afternoon that he passed, we talked about how formative of an influence the FALL had been on both of us as musicians, and I somewhat jokingly said that finding out about Mark's death was my BOWIE / PRINCE moment, thinking back to how everyone in our workplace immediately went into collective mourning when they heard that those two had died. It's really a much more fitting analogy than I had initially realized, though—in the midst of the posthumous narratives hailing BOWIE and PRINCE as creative geniuses, many people were rightfully pointing out some of those men's past abuses and transgressions that shouldn't be erased from the conversations surrounding their talent and cultural impact. The FALL were a truly mind-bending band, and Mark E. Smith deserves due credit for that, but as the man himself once said, *"check the record / check the guy's track record."*

No Wave heroines UT have just reissued their first two EPs (1984's *Ut* and 1985's *Confidential*) in a combined 2x12" collection on their own Out label. Although they started out in 1978 as part of the same community of New York City's visual artists and avant-garde noisemakers who formed the core of the era's downtown scene, the trio left for London in 1981 before releasing any proper recordings, which has left them somewhat disconnected from the commonly circulated histories that tend to center No Wave around the bands who were documented on the *No New York* compilation LP (TEENAGE JESUS AND THE JERKS, MARS, JAMES CHANCE AND THE CONTORTIONS, and DNA). One of the instigating factors for the group's relocation was actually an UT cassette that fell into the hands of Mark E. Smith, who offered them slots supporting the FALL on their next UK tour, and it's a historical footnote that provides some spot-on context for UT's very FALL-aligned approach to dissonance and deconstruction through repetition. Sally Young, Nina Canal, and Jacqui Ham took turns rotating instruments and vocal duties on all of the band's songs, with the various configurations of those roles (generally drums and dual guitars, but not always) and each member's distinct performative approaches serving to refract the resulting sound from one track to the next in subtle but ever-shifting ways. On the self-titled EP, "Sham Shack" writhes at a slow but steady mutant disco pulse, dispensing with guitars altogether in favor of ominous organ, hypnotic tom-heavy drumming, and a loping, insistent bassline like BUSH TETRAS reinterpreting the more sprawling moments on *Hex Enduction Hour*, while the DNA-ish scratchy six-string strangulation and stammering vocals on "This Bliss" demonstrate UT at their most classically "No Wave." By the time they had recorded the *Confidential* EP, UT were charting a very similar course as their former New York peers in SONIC YOUTH and transforming their tangled squall and razor-edged scrape with an almost conventional pop-leaning bent (just check that acoustic guitar break in the otherwise martial drone of "Bedouin"), but without completely smoothing out the sharp angles that made their raw post-punk clamor so electrifying. A very necessary reissue. (Out, utmusic.bandcamp.com)

Yet another entry in the "unjustly neglected '80s femme-punk outfits" archive: HELTER SKELTER, a Sydney, Australia quintet whose recorded output is limited to a two-song 7" from 1984 on Hot Records that expertly twists together gauzy coldwave and jaggedly rhythmic post-punk. There seems to be little to no trace of the band's existence to be found in the deep abyss of the internet, but I'm guessing that they spun out of the same art-damaged Sydney post-punk underground responsible for similarly-minded (but far less enigmatic) groups like PEL MEL and SARDINE. "Make Believe," the A-side of that lone HELTER SKELTER single, sounds like some parallel universe SIOUXSIE SIOUX fronting an early '80s Factory Records band, with guitarist Diannah Levy's dramatically icy vocals cutting through the clatter of electronically-

treated drums and trumpet. On the B-side, "The Party" is essentially everything that made me so enamored with PYLON—cavernous, repetitive bassline pushed to the forefront, sparse and trebly single-note guitar stabs, Levy's fiercely detached delivery of her oblique lyrics, total anxious dancefloor energy for the freaks and weirdos. If you're only going to put out one record, it should be as good as this one.

Say hey at ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds at futuresandpasts.org.

**Lessons Aren't Punk, Or, I Want to Teach Myself Something**

Recently, while watching a group of kids in awe over otters playing together in the water, a friend of mine threw out the question, "Do you remember the last time you were that excited about something?" I never learned how to read, play, or understand the mechanics of music. I was a stubborn kid (who's grown into a stubborn adult) and quit drums after two years of public school-issued band classes. The teacher would only let one boy near the drumset, and it pissed me off. I didn't grow up going to church regularly, and when I did attend I would either just not sing along to the hymns or give a half-hearted lip-sync.

So I had resigned myself to being solely a fan of music. (Something my friend Nicole assured me would come in handy as the first step in learning.) And not to sound dramatic, but punk music saved my life. We all know the feelings it sparks from following friends on the weekends, singing along to their songs. Going to the show of a band I loved was like an out-of-body experience.

I went to college, got the full-time job with benefits that would allow me to maintain the health insurance needed to support my disability. The more I "grew up," the further away music started to feel. That excitement became something to be reserved for select moments in life, meant to entertain but not sustain. From where I stood on my path in life, music was across the way. By all means that I had set a standard for in my life, I was surviving it. The idea of the word "hobby" has always felt jejune. As if any activity that you can't show a utilitarian product from is automatically classified as frivolous. Not that I've ever had any hobbies, unless watching HBO counts. But as Christopher Moltisanti says in the first season of *the Sopranos*, "I don't want to just survive." I wanted to experience what it was like to learn something not for a grade or for praise, but to remind myself of what I was capable of as a conscious being.

One night, after driving for three hours singing along to one of my current fave emo bands at the top of my lungs with the volume turned all the way up, I fell asleep with my phone in my hands and woke up to my Google search of "How to Teach Yourself to Sing." The energy that music ignites has evolved over time, but it's still there. Feelings of possibility, loneliness, love, and anger that punk sparks. But that excitement hasn't existed without expectation. Another time, discussing with my roommate our disappointment in bands we admire continuing to turn out to have questionable morals, we said, "we should just start our own screamo band."

So that's when I decided to do what felt like the most un-punk thing—to take singing lessons. Screaming would be easy: I'd turned enough Third Eye Blind karaoke into my personal screamo renditions. But I knew nothing about how to prepare my stamina or compose a song. I couldn't even tell you what the structure of a song is like. (Stay tuned in one of these columns to find out if I ever figure out the difference a melody and a harmony.)

I turned to Craigslist, where I would find Annie, twenty minutes outside of town, and made my first appointment for two weeks out, giving myself a little buffer to make sure I could keep up the excitement and not treat it as a passing thought. The first things you learn in voice lessons are the same in just about any physical activity in life: posture, stretching, hydration, breathing. Annie walked me through the mechanics of what happens in the body when a person sings. I picture what my intercostal muscles might look like as they expand to fill my lungs with air. Annie asked me to practice a buzzing of the lips that was surprisingly hard at first, and I felt the first of many waves of embarrassment.

Learning music as an adult probably feels similar to learning it at any other age. There is a level of embarrassment that we try to avoid in life, keeping us from pursuing tasks that require it. It's an inevitable emotion that comes as a part of being aware of ourselves, especially as a teen, and the learning curve is to index those times we've felt the sickness of social anxiety in order to avoid it in the future. But Annie laughed along with me and made me feel like these blunders were normal. She encouraged me to record our session and left me with homework: to listen for and to practice my pitches. I jumped into things without putting much thought into where I would practice. What would my roommates, who are musicians, think if they overheard me? Places I've managed to practice: in the car, when my roommates aren't home, riding my bike to work, while dog sitting at a stranger's houses, doing karaoke. It doesn't happen naturally and, in some ways, has become another thing to fit into life. But there is an app that allows me to analyze pitch in solfege, and I'm learning to trust the way that it feels to hear myself.

When I told my parents about my new project their response was "Why?" Why put myself in a position to be disappointed in myself? Why start something that I have no intention of mastering? Why impose an expectation on myself to be disciplined into something I don't *need* to do? Because what the frick else am I doing. Doing things "just because" you want to do them is often talked about in reference to frivolous activities—like just wanting to try a new restaurant, or just wanting to buy a new jacket. But sometimes doing something "just because" you want to do it looks like following through, even when you don't know where it will lead you.

**Band Drama**

I've been playing in bands for fourteen years now. Someone recently asked me how many bands I've been in, and honestly, I don't know. I don't mean to sound like a dick; I'm not disrespecting anyone that I've ever played with, and I'm definitely not trying to sound like a cool guy who can't keep track. I've just been in a lot of "projects." I grew up in Sonoma County and it was easy there. We have the historic Phoenix Theater, the Arlene Francis Center, and so many other small venues, so if you had the initiative, there's no reason not to just do it. It's easy to find a stage, it's easy to find an audience, and, when I was growing up, it was really easy to find musicians. So any time someone had an inspiration to try a new genre or a new instrument or anything, they'd just grab a few friends from the scene, write four or so songs, learn two covers, and they'd have a solid live set. Record those four songs on the cheap and release it on burned

homemade CDs with handmade printed out artwork, and that's all that it takes to be a band. I was in *a lot* of projects like that: they would last three months or so, and then that's it. I've had my few main bands that were my focus, and those relationships were very important to me at the time, but at any one time there were a fair amount of relationships that I was juggling. So, I can look at it as I've been in a lot of projects, but just as importantly I can look at it as I've been in a lot of *failed* projects. All of them in some form or another fizzled or came to a conclusion or crashed-and-burned, or the worst, went on the big "H."

I think that band relationships are just as important as the romantic relationships that anyone is ever in. Your bandmates require time, attention, patience, forgiveness, stimulation, trust, and a general sense of commitment, same as a partner. There are many times when you spend more time with your bandmates than your partner, and your partner will get jealous—and vice versa. They'll become a part of your life, good or bad, and if you're going to stay together all these things need to be addressed. That's what I want to talk about here: why bands fight, why bands work or don't work, why bands succeed, and why bands break up. What's the difference between a happy, functioning band and a band that's destined to fail. So in almost every way this is kind of a relationship column, to examine the fragile relationships that you have with your bandmates.

The hardest breakup that I've been through was the first one. It was the first band that I had started from the beginning and didn't just join. I contributed to the decision of the name, I contributed to the aesthetic of the band, I designed our logo, and I felt like I mattered. We were open-minded about the sound, and it came out as open-ended soundscape drone post-rock type stuff, so we had a kind of infinite freedom. The idea would be that we'd structure the skeleton of the song and then grow to the next "movement" when we felt it, similar to GODSPEED YOU! BLACK EMPEROR. I was really drawn to that ethos because it meant that we could do no wrong. In every other band that I had joined, I would naturally fuck up a few times during a set and be made to feel so guilty, like I had failed my bandmates. Here I had the freedom to take risks because I was a pillar in the band, not just the new, weak link. The idea was that the band was the three of us at the helm, and also an open door for anyone else. Practice was on Thursdays, and anyone could attend with their own gear. We'd teach them the few riffs of each movement and then just kind of let it happen organically. It was the opposite of what I had felt from other bands where I had to uphold their image and fill the void that their previous member had left—I was always the new guy, or the "other" guy. With this band we constantly had "new guys" every Thursday, so I made it a point to treat them well and communicate effectively so that they wouldn't feel like they were letting anyone down. It was kind of an orphanage in that way some weeks, but once we got it going, more established scene vets would come in and the range of skill would be pretty apparent.

I always sided with the kids that struggled, and that clashed with my bandmate, let's call him "Anthony." He and I were the heads along with "Jen." Anthony was the ringleader on Thursdays and had a strong enough personality that people listened when he talked. Jen was creative and very talented, so she was great at rearranging songs to fit the makeup of the room, and I had patience and could keep everyone in the room from getting frustrated. At the beginning, that dynamic worked. I saw the band as more of a spectacle, like a living entity that was literally never the same. For that reason, I thought we'd be fascinating to see live, because it was consistently brand new, with the tone and aesthetic being the only thing to keep it recognizable every week. The problem was that it was a behemoth that was impossible to ever really control. Anthony wanted to be a leader and therefore wanted to have control, but it was like trying to make a picture with puzzle pieces that were constantly being replaced. It got to a point where he'd only talk to people who he wanted to stay, and be really cold and disrespectful towards people who he didn't want to come back. Essentially, he wanted to have more "regulars" and fewer "randos." The band then became two halves of a room: Anthony with his "regulars" refining riffs and writing new ones on one side, and me on the other side trying to bring the "randos" up to speed, Jen going back and forth between the two of us. It was tense, but in comparison to how it was before, it was actually better.

And then Jen left...

So now we were two hostile entities without an ambassador. Anthony basically starting the band that he would eventually quit ours for, and me, with my "randos," trying to make sure that they felt welcome. Resolving my own past shortcomings by exonerating theirs.

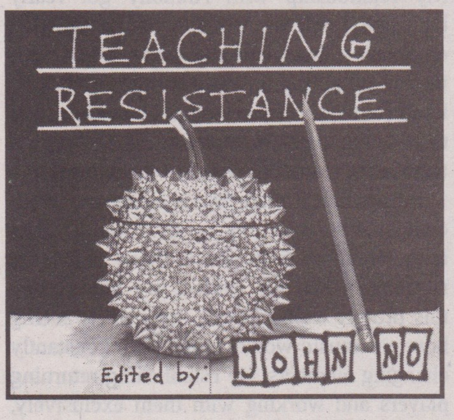
We lasted about three years, but truthfully, the last year after Jen left was basically empty. We technically "broke up" because I moved to the East Bay, but in many ways it was us letting the old sick dog go under the porch to die. So who was at fault? Honestly, our problem was that we had different goals. Anthony liked the idea of the band, but didn't have the personality to be a part of something so unstructured. Jen liked the idea of getting the opportunity to play with so many different people, but I know that the vibe definitely got to her by the end. I mean it when I say that we didn't mean to put her in the middle, but there ended up not being any other place for her. For years afterwards I blamed myself entirely. I was the one who was supposed to be patient and forgiving, so I was the one that was supposed to be keeping everyone together. My relationship with Anthony got really bad, and I felt his resentment for insisting on keeping those kids that weren't getting it instead of cutting the dead weight. Ironically, I had started this band so that I wouldn't have to feel like a let down again, but I ended up appointing myself the head of the letdowns.

I think that if there was a moment that we could have saved this band, it would have been when we first saw Anthony recruiting regulars. When we started, we agreed that this project would be the three of us seeing how our music would sound with constantly changing elements. By establishing returning players and working with them exclusively, he was breaking that. That doesn't mean that we should accuse him of anything, but if we wanted it to work we couldn't set those standards for anyone who came in on Thursday. If he wasn't cool with that, then I could have encouraged him to start a side project with those regulars to explore, but for *our* band it wasn't appropriate. We shouldn't have let the room divide like that. With that said, I fully understand why Jen left, and for that reason I didn't try as hard as I could have to stop her. Looking back, when she left we should have just ended the band—and that's not a bad thing. Something that chaotic isn't meant to ever really function well, so if it doesn't have a solid core then it's going to spiral out of control eventually. I stand by my desire to keep the band open to *all* musicians regardless of skill level, but in hindsight I can totally understand Anthony's frustration with those who needed to have their hands held. Taking myself out of the equation, the band would have functioned much better and frustrations would have subsided if we had been more discerning about who could come in and who could come back.

So if we had made these changes and had been better at communicating, would we still be a band today? Maybe! The band would have been effortless if we had let it be, but as soon as we had any expectations, it ruined the nature of the project and it fell apart. But at that point in our lives we weren't looking for an easy, low risk / low reward band, so if it had kept going I think we would have eventually gotten bored with it when it didn't change or progress. I very clearly remember that first Thursday after we ended being one of the hardest nights I've experienced, and Thursday nights still feel restless for me. I wish we would have had a cleaner ending, but

I'm satisfied with this band ending overall. In the end, as with everything, it was a learning experience, and I learned a little about relationships and the relationships that I have with my bandmates.

—Michael De Toffoli




*"Critical thinking" is one of the most overused and poorly understood tropes in education. Students (plus a hell of a lot of parents and some teachers) often mistakenly conflate critical thinking and analysis skills with contrarianism—the tendency to dismiss any broadly-accepted and / or well-researched information or analysis as patently false simply due to its common acceptance. In contrast, genuine critical thinking can (and should) involve healthy skepticism with regard to certain established "facts" but shouldn't hinge on simply taking the opposite position to every such assertion.*

*For many people—rebellious teens, lots of punks (particularly those for whom being "anti-PC" is a primary motivator), Republicans, fascists, your shitty Alex Jones-loving uncle / former bandmate, member of WHO KILLED SPIKEY JACKET?, etc.—this amounts to replying to every argument or statement that hits uncomfortably close to home by spouting off the intellectual equivalent to "I know you are but what am I??," maybe backed up by some memes or YouTube links to other contrarians. While being a reactionary for the sake of it can seem damn exciting and often gets a rise out of one's target (along with whatever satisfaction one gets from wasting their time), it pales compared to the long-term danger to the status quo one can represent when they know how to genuinely, thoroughly research an argument or topic and carefully evaluate the sources one uses to back up one's assertions.*

*This month's Teaching Resistance, which details a lesson plan for helping students evaluate their sources and think critically on the real, is by the amazing Jessica Mills. Jessica is a punk lifer who has played sax and bass for quite a few bands since the early '90s and into the present. She is a former* MRR *columnist and author of the punk parenting memoir / guide* My Mother Wears Combat Boots *(AK Press), current* MRR *book reviewer, and English instructor at Central New Mexico Community College in Albuquerque. Jessica can be reached at yardwideyarns@hotmail.com.*

**Personal Pedagogy: How I Revised a Major Essay Assignment Since the 2016 Presidential Election to Reflect More Critical Thinking and Evaluation of News Media**

I love a good, cliché punk rock joke as much as the next punk, yet the "Well, at least punk music is gonna be as awesome as it was under Reagan and Thatcher" sentiment that I heard too many times soon after Trump was elected fell upon my ears as flat as a deflated nihilist. Maybe it's the middle-aged wise-punk speaking, or maybe it's the community college writing instructor in me, but my gut told me to reevaluate and revise my College Writing curriculum (in addition, of course, to starting a new band and protesting the daily shit storm).

For College Writing, our faculty-developed curriculum includes a unit each of personal narrative / life as text (to engage), evaluation (to persuade), and multi-source research report (to inform). In the evaluation unit, students are introduced to the genre of evaluation (a judgment, using certain criteria, supported with reasons and evidence). Students read and analyze sample evaluations in class and work toward writing an evaluation (review) of a local restaurant, book, or new technology. Students gain practice in crafting specific thesis statements, making claims that support the thesis, and supporting claims with reasoned evidence. Moreover, students learn to create criteria that meets their given audience, purpose, and writing situation. After the election, however, several of us faculty members got together to expand our vision of what this unit could and should be. What follows is a sketch of my revised unit plan:

Instead of asking students to analyze different local restaurant reviews found in the local, free newsweekly, go out to eat at a local restaurant, and write an evaluation of it, I introduced basic media literacy concepts that included analyzing the credibility of sources. Actively engaging in teaching critical thinking while teaching rhetoric and composition brought back my first-year teacher excitement 22 years later!

I started my students off with a reading, "Wikipedia as a Site of Knowledge Production" by Danah Boyd, to provide them an example of what an evaluation essay might look like and to introduce the idea of actually questioning the validity of easily accessible information. We spent an entire class meeting discussing the reading, and I revealed the myriad reasons why they were learning about evaluating sources and identifying logical fallacies. We chatted about the fake news crisis and how it's been around forever, but due to the heavy trafficking of misleading information via social media of late, it is in the spotlight in a way it hasn't been since the "golden" days of yellow journalism.

I then sent my students off with additional articles to read, some of which are found below in the "additional resources" section, and with instructions for them to take a short quiz from the BBC to see if they could tell real from fake news: Fake or Real? Take this BBC Quiz – bbc.com/news/magazine-38005844

In teacher-speak, this is called "scaffolding" as these articles and the quiz would serve as the basis for the next class activity—using predetermined criteria checklists to investigate different popular news websites. For this next activity, I compiled a list of 30 news websites that included actual news, propaganda, hoaxes, and conspiracy theories. Students used the checklist that I provided them, which I had created from the articles they'd read as homework, to take notes on each website. At the next class period, students compared notes, and perhaps the most engaging, lively discussion of the entire semester unfolded before my eyes. I knew I'd struck the proverbial teacher-gold, the teachable moment.

With the foundation set, I then assigned my students to write a formal evaluation of one of the websites on the website evaluation assignment handout. The assignment included the following instructions:

"Make sure to identify the criteria you are using to evaluate the website. The evaluation can include your opinion, but opinions should relate to specifically defined criteria, rather than saying what you 'like' or 'dislike' about the website. Ultimately, you are making a judgment of the information found on the website. The following content should be included in the introduction of your evaluation essay: a brief description of the website, a description of the criteria you're using to evaluate the website, and a judgment (thesis statement) of the website according to these criteria. Remember that evaluation judgments make a claim along these lines: fakeassnews.com is (not) a 'good' news website because it (fails to) meet(s) criteria A, B, C [criteria you use to evaluate topic]. Make sure that you support your judgment with specific evidence. If you are judging that the *fakeassnews* website provides credible news because it is unbiased and includes news beyond this city, then you need to support these statements with specific examples from articles found on the website."

At the end of the semester, when I asked my students for feedback on the course, I heard

from many of them that they at first wished I had assigned the easier local restaurant evaluation assignment instead of the website evaluation assignment. At first, they didn't want a more difficult challenge that included critical thinking, but they did wind up admitting that their "minds were blown" and that they never before thought to analyze and question news sources, let alone know *how* to do so.

I felt my mission was accomplished. Sure, the learning objectives for the course were met and I could then check the appropriate boxes on my institution's end-of-semester assessment report, but more importantly, my students would be taking the skills they learned in the evaluation unit forward. They will have a lot of evaluating to do.

**A short-list of resources for educators:**

**Articles:**

- "The Fact Checker's Guide for Detecting Fake News" by Glenn Kessler "Fake or Real? How to Self-Check the News and Get the Facts" by Wynne Davis
- "When to Trust a Story That Uses Unnamed Sources" by Perry Bacon Jr.
- "Which Anonymous Sources Are Worth Paying Attention To?" by Perry Bacon Jr.
- "10 Journalism Brands Where You Find Real Facts Rather Than Alternative Facts" by the Berlin School of Creative Leadership
- "To Test Your Fake News Judgment, Play This Game" by Tennessee Watson
- "Why Fake News Works" by Edward Burmila
- "How Fake News Spreads" by Sapna Maheshwari
- "We Have a Bad News Problem, Not a Fake News Problem" by David Mikkelson

**Websites:**

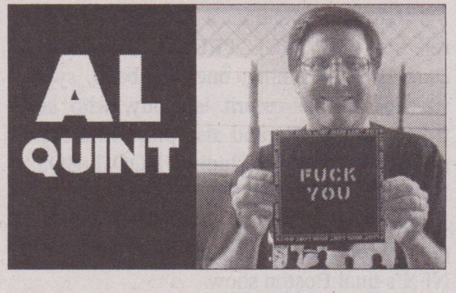
- allgeneralizationsarefalse.com
- newseumed.org: Free learning tools on media literacy and our First Amendment freedoms
- snopes.com: Snopes' Field Guide to Fake News Sites and Hoax Purveyors
- opensources.co: List of fake news websites founded by Melissa Zimdars, Associate Professor at Merrimack College

**Video:**

- 4 Ways to Spot a Fake News Story | What the Stuff?!

*The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers / educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), Community Colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com*

*—John No, Teaching Resistance editor*




**WITHER DISCHORD?**

I don't read the mainstream music press all that much anymore. Once in awhile, something will show up in my Facebook news feed or someone will email me a story of interest. Anyway, I was perusing the magazine rack at the local chain bookstore and noticed a copy of *Billboard*. When I was in my music retail management days, I'd read *Billboard* every week to stay on top of the industry news. In those pre-internet days, that was where I gleaned a lot of information about upcoming releases, record label signings, mergers and stuff like that.

I'm long-removed from the music biz universe, perfectly happy to do my blog, column, and radio show. I couldn't even tell you what's hot and what's not, but a story on the front page immediately caught my eye: *Dischord to Jettison Fugazi Catalogue.* That stopped me dead in my tracks. The story was written by Chris Morris, who was the editor of *Billboard* some years back and still apparently contributes content. Chris came up through the L.A. punk scene, so he does know what he's talking about, and I'm inclined to trust his information. He wrote about how Dischord had been hemorrhaging money, with the failure of recent releases to generate much in the way of sales as well as the usual problems with illegal downloads. Dischord's done some vintage reissues in recent years—the YOUTH BRIGADE demo 7" was absolutely mind-blowing. But Dischord has continued to release new music and, in order to keep doing so, Ian MacKaye decided to make the drastic decision to license FUGAZI's releases to Sony Music. The deal is expected to generate $10 million in immediate revenue, and Dischord retains rights to all other back catalogue, including MINOR THREAT, VOID, EMBRACE, the FAITH, and GOVERNMENT ISSUE. Ian explained the selection of Sony by saying, "well, if I have to make this move, I thought it'd be awesome for FUGAZI's music have the same imprint as the CLASH and TED NUGENT. I know Nugent's politics are reprehensible, but every HarDCore kid had *Cat Scratch Fever* in their collection and that's pre-racist era Nuge, anyway."

There's even talk of FUGAZI playing another show. Now that their music is going to be released through Sony, CEO Rob Stringer is going to push to have them elected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. If they get in, Stringer wants them to play at the Hall's annual concert. Stringer also has punk bona fides, having played in UK punk band ROB NOXIOUS AND THE CRABS in the late '70s. You can find their song "I've Got Crabs" on the *Bloodstains Across The UK, Volume 18* compilation. He's quoted in the article as saying, "I think these musical legends deserve their place alongside such pioneers as CHUCK BERRY, LITTLE RICHARD, and MADONNA." The other members appear to be on board, save guitarist / vocalist Guy Picciotto, who was last seen at a Washington Wizards game last year and even appeared on the Jumbotron. He couldn't be reached for comment.

I have mixed feelings. Some of my favorite punk music did come out on major labels and I suppose it would indeed be cool to have their music released alongside the CLASH. Not so much TED NUGENT, though. He'd probably just call them vegetable-eating, tree-hugging PC idiots, anyway.

**NECK CHOPPIN'**

Back to the indie label world: Neck Chop Records, out of Fullerton, CA, started in 2016 and, in that brief time, already have 25 releases under their belts. Actually, not them, him—Brandon is the sole proprietor. Lest you think it's just throwing shit against the wall to see what sticks, most of these have been quality releases, including the likes of ERIK NERVOUS, ACRYLICS, MACHO BOYS, WOODBOOT, MARK CONE, and plenty more. The tagline for my radio show is "punk, hardcore, garage, and other loud music," and that's what Brandon puts out, in different forms and permutations.

Brandon sent me a huge package of thirteen records, seven of which were released at the same time, and that's what we'll focus on here. KNOWSO's one-sided 12", *Look At The Chart*, sounds like a slightly less-mechanized A-FRAMES, but there's a robotic element. The title track is a paranoid tale of science possibly gone too far. The speed up and slow down of the riff signature at the end sounds like an adjustment is being made to the narrator's wiring until the plug is pulled. Straddling the line between post-punk and nervous new wave, with an edgy intensity.

JACKSON POLITICK is another solo project for Andy Jordan, a.k.a ANDY HUMAN. His *Paste V.1* album is a wide-ranging effort of punk and pop minimalism and the results are scattershot. The lo-fi punk of "Habit" and "Learning To Live With It" are nervy delights, and "I Am A Raver" has an engaging catchiness. The early OMD-meets-bedroom pop of "The Hours" has an offbeat charm. Other songs are on the too-cutesy / twee side. If you're into the C86 bands or TENEMENT, you might like those songs more than I do.

LIVING EYES are from Australia, and I'd imagine there's a good chance they're named after RADIO BIRDMAN's second album, but you can only hear faint echoes of that band, and it's not really a major component of their muse. Their third album, *Modern Living*, is a hit and miss collection of tuneful punk with garage and psych shadings. "Better Think Again," "Party Theme," "Stuck In A Hole," and "Horseplay" are all good charging rockers, but other songs don't have nearly as much presence. All in all, kind of an average effort—some good moments, but not always that gripping.

Moving on to the 7"s, Winnipeg band WHIP's self-titled EP is a raucous joy. Snotty, insolent-sounding, punk with a trebly guitar attack and a whole lot of fuck-you attitude in Ferro's vocals. Pretty straightforward, although they add some against-the-grain elements at times, as with the post-punk jab for "Double Life" and "Melle." In addition to this 7" (their vinyl debut), WHIP also just released a new demo, *Can Con Icon*, which includes a cool cover of DOW JONES & THE INDUSTRIALS' "Can't Stand The Midwest."

GEE TEE is another solo project, this one masterminded by an Australian named Kel Gee who plays in garage mavens the DRAGGS. Hissy, lo-fi, quirky new wave / punk / pop that has an appealingly skewed nature. A cruder-sounding version of AUSMUTEANTS-meets-SPITS-meets-UV RACE-meets-TOTAL CONTROL. Something like that. There are hooks to go along with the weird, mad-scientist ambiance. *Death Race* is his second 7", following the *Thugs In Cars* EP released on Goodbye Boozy early last year, and that one is just as enjoyable as this scorcher.

Philly bashers PENETRODE and Chicago hellions C.H.E.W's split tape *Strange New Universe* has been given a vinyl pressing, and both bands generate some skull-crushing sounds with different wrinkles. PENETRODE's songs have a mean / stomping old-school hardcore cadence à la 86 MENTALITY at times, although "Egocentric" takes an anarcho-punk turn. C.H.E.W. impressed on their split with RASH last year and are still impressive on their four songs on this split. Nightmarish hardcore with a relentless quality, accompanied by anguished and howling screams from the soul.

COLOR TV's second 7" *Paroxeteens* is a pair of jabbing, tuneful punk gems along the same lines as MARKED MEN. The chorus for the title track has an absolutely knockout hook, and "Night After Night" is just as punchy. These two songs feature denser, less-clean production than on their debut, and that makes it sound harder-edged. Fine with me.

I have to mention a few of the other releases—SCIENCE PROJECT's *Basement Blues* is entertaining, one-man-band, synthy weirdness. The culprit is Cody, who hails from Nova Scotia and also plays in a bunch of other projects including BOOJI BOYS. His cover of NEGATIVE FX's "Might Makes Right" is hilarious, as he explains *"we ain't gonna stop...fuck you!"* just like Choke did at NFX's final Boston show.

Raymond Schmidt is another one-man science project, RACE CAR, and *B.Y.O.G.K.* (or *Build Your Own Go-Kart*) was originally released on tape on Abnormal Broadcasting. While synths and programmed drums are part of the equation, it's a noisier, clattering, head-messing approach laced with searing guitar licks. Channeling METAL URBAIN and CHROME and stripping them to their barest elements? That works. If you can't get enough of that sort of thing, Raymond has another project called SBF, who released a really good demo on Abnormal Broadcasting a few years ago. Along the same lines with programmed drums and drill-press guitar, although it's more of a straight-forward punk attack.

Another Abnormal Broadcasting release that's been pressed onto vinyl by Neck Chop comes from PROCESS OF ELIMINATION, once again featuring one performer, Grant Berry. Three songs of electrifying mechanized primitivism with distorted vocals and spacy synth and guitar effects. Grant also plays guitar in the SNAILS, whose two Abnormal Broadcasting demos have been given the vinyl treatment (hmmm...something doesn't sound right about that). More traditional-sounding punk and hardcore bordering on nerdy new wave, but with live drums and no synths. Just buzz.

Round Six, with five more releases, is already in the works and should be out very soon. It includes a new LIQUIDS LP, an ERIK NERVOUS singles compilation LP and new 7"s from KID CHROME, LYSOL, and STIFF LOVE. (PO Box 5635, Fullerton, CA 92838, neck-chop-records.myshopify.com)

**BUILDING BRIDGES**

Chris Wrenn started Bridge Nine Records in 1995 while he was a college student in Vermont, and over the past 23 or so years, it's grown from a tiny DIY label run on a shoestring budget to one run out of a large warehouse in Peabody, MA, about five minutes from my house. Chris is up to over 250 releases at this point, a long way from running the fledgling label out of his dorm room.

*The First Nine Years* is a box set with five 7" EPs, each with a heavy stock picture sleeve, with songs drawn from the label's first 50 releases—29 songs in all—accompanied by a 128-page soft-cover booklet. It tells the Bridge Nine story—all the trials and tribulations and the creative ways he financed and promoted the label, like painting the company's name in the middle of the night on a bridge over the Charles River that was usually painted by rowing teams. He talks candidly about his struggle to keep things afloat when he runs into a serious snag with his distributor. There are reminiscences about the bands who had records released on B9 during that time. It's been an interesting journey, one borne of an abiding passion for the music, and that continues to this day. There's never been anything half-assed about a Bridge Nine release.

Bridge Nine's roster has become more diverse in recent years—my favorite release is CEREMONY's *Rohnert Park* album from 2010, which branched out into post-punk, garage, and shoegaze rock along with more traditionally hardcore-sounding material. During the early era, though, the emphasis was on straight-edge hardcore that generally used early Revelation Records as a starting point. Opening band TENFOLD sound more than a little like CHAIN OF STRENGTH. In fact, the last song is taken from B9's reissue of PROJECT X's *Straight Edge Revenge* EP. There are darker shadings from the likes of PANIC and GIVE UP THE GHOST (aka AMERICAN NIGHTMARE). COPS AND ROBBERS hearken back to classic early '80s hardcore, as their song "On The Decline" borrows from NEGATIVE FX's "VFW." But it's mainly aggressive, pummeling material from some well-known parties—TERROR, CARRY ON, NO WARNING and HOPE CONSPIRACY, along with the slightly-underrated STRIKING DISTANCE and HOLDING ON.

It has to be noted that this end of the hardcore spectrum was (and still is) a very male-oriented scene, at least in terms of the bands included—that's my perception, anyway. You don't see that many women in the photos and few are mentioned in the story. Still, this is a well put-together package, coming out some thirteen years after its projected release. Better late than never! (www.bridgenine.com)

Al Quint, PO Box 43, Peabody, MA 01960, subvox82@gmail.com, sonicoverload.net, subvox.blogspot.com

*"You plan your conversation to impress the college bar / Just talking about your mother / and Daddy's Jaguar / Wear your political t-shirt and sacred college scarf / Discussing / the world's situation but just for a laugh / You'll be working for the rat race / You know you're wasting your time / Working for the rat race / You're no friend of mine"*
—The SPECIALS, "Rat Race"

**Tear the Building Down**

The state of Oi! in the tail end of the second decade of the 21st century is like an iceberg; the coverage and recognition given to bands and labels by patrician-punks and cosplay-skins is only the tip of a deeper and larger underground scene. It's a scene / genre / subculture that is feared and avoided—or derided and co-opted—by non-members and parvenus. It's a scene that many of the readers of *Maximum Rocknroll* would like to see disappear. For those readers who are already loyal supporters of Oi!, this is old news (Tim Yo old!). For those just cutting their teefs on Oi!'s gnarly boot, investigate further than these pristine pages. My acquiesce to editorial policy means I rarely delve below the waterline of this big ol' Oi!ce-berg, and there's a lot of Oi! out there—good and bad. For what it's worth, here's a bit of both.

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**THE CHARLEY FEW – *Teufelshunde* LP (This Fucking City):** Skateboarding skinheads?! They exist in Philly bruh. This is the second album from these South Philly stalwarts. *Teufelshunde* (not a secret menu item at Wienerschnitzel) is in all ways an improvement on 2014's *Punk Fire Never Die*. The songs are tighter, and the album feels more cohesive from track to track. They've reinvigorated the stoop-drinking Oi! that was prevalent in the late '90s *à la* the TRUENTS and the BOILS, or maybe a less dogmatic PIST—vocalist Bill Barton even sounds like Al Ouimet at times. The opener "Back on the Streets" sets the tone: *"Down for life ain't an easy thing / Sometimes the good guys lose and the bad guys win / People quit without a second thought / Giving up / Cashing out / No more battle fought / But I'm walking with my boots on all day / Stare 'em in the face always / And I write another song / Who plays? / Our scene Hostile City!"*

In regards to packaging and production, it's inspiring to see DIY Oi! reach the same level as the big Oi! labels. *Teufelshunde* is a nice looking record that includes a poster, lyric insert, and an informative one-sheet with tips on how to set up a show. Top Oi! from South Philly that keeps getting better!

***

**THE DETAINED – *The Beast* LP (Contra / Longshot):** Slow Oi!ish Hardcore (I rock against "Oi!-core") from der Deutschland that lives in the limbo between good and bad (aka the shrug-zone). Vocals are in English but with a mighty German accent that gives everything a constrained and stern feeling. Listening to *The Beast,* I kept wishing the songs would break out into something interesting, maybe a mosh or tempo change. No solos or nuffin! Two exceptions are "Into the Fire," an above average swaggering punk song that features Beckie Chaos on vocals, and the title track, which sounds a bit like a Motör-clone band stuck on 33...which is to say, interesting? Not mind-blowing, but not boring like the rest of the album. Lyrics are safe and vague. Maybe would be relevant if I lived in Berlin. "Blind Eyes" is pretty solid in its condemnation of liberal hypocrites who wave the flag of BLM but still "cross the street avoiding sketchy, tall, and dark." Welcome to the shrug-zone!

***

**FACELESS OFFENDERS – *We Don't Pose* EP (Contra):** FACELESS OFFENDERS is a studio project from unnamed "veterans" of the Oi! and skinhead scene. There's a strong SKINFLICKS / LES VILAINS Benelux Oi! feel to this. *We Don't Pose* has hooks aplenty but keeps its grit so as to avoid slipping into Pirate's Press-style streetpunk territory. Lyrics are aimed at "whiny hippies" in the punk / Oi! scene, hipsters posing as punks / skins, Nazis, and "hippies"—again—who conflate Oi! with politics (the horror!). The last song, "Die in Style," is a sharp and catchy tune that uses classic Oi! song titles for the body of the lyrics—*à la* "Two Jealous Agains": *"Chaos on the street / The very last resort / No fuss no muss pure impact / Oi! Oi that's yer lot / We're kids of the '80s / Of course we don't trust / One law for them another law for us! / Skinhead! / This is our life / Boots and braces / We die in style / Forever skinhead all the time / Boot boys are out tonight!"* I'll say this is above average. There's a level of cynicism that is bordering on satire. Or maybe the other way around. But it's obvious FACELESS OFFENDERS value Oi! as a genre, and I appreciate that.

***

**HOLY FLAME – *Hold On* EP (Randale):** Three more bubbly-bass'd adult contemporary streetpunk tunes from Jenny Woo and affiliates. Woo's inflected rasp has entered into the realm of parody and sounds like Trey Parker's vocals for the joke band, DVDA (*"It's the working may-owan who pays the price!"*) Jokes aside, this shit is boring. The opener, "Hold On," sounds like a new RANCID throwaway track. "Radio" is a polished piece of schlock about how much "we" love the radio—*"Whoa-oh / Turn up that radio / Turn up the songs we know / Turn up that radio / Whoa-oh-oh-oh!"* She must love the EAGLES and BILLY JOEL cuz that's all I ever hear on my radio at work (WDVE 102.5 represent!). Things come to a close with "The Flame Still Burns," which sounds like a Google AI computer brain wrote it after being fed the Randale Records catalog. I'm sure you can catch HOLY FLAME at Rebellion Festival or Warped Tour (same thing). Hard pass on this.

***

**PROTEIN – Demo 2017 (Youth2Youth):** Yes, my dudes! Activate your X-Swatch shaped time portal. Lace up your chrono-Nikes and secure your temporal dimension suit (Champion brand) cuz you're going back in time (Back! In! Time!) Sike! You're traveling to modern day Poland! (Brrr!) PROTEIN operates in the intertextual world of allusion / homage / pastiche common to niche genres. The music is spot on '86–'88 youth crew. We're talking dive bombs into sick mosh breakdowns, slow buildups—with Cappo "Rrrar-arr-ar!"growls—into sicker mosh breakdows. We got end of song tempo changes, talk singing, and of course (Of! Course!) punctuated gang vocals (pronounced "vo-cow-o-wow-cals!"). Even when I was a dirtbag drunk, I had a soft spot for youth crew. Like Oi!, it exists in a feedback loop of principles—or platitudes, and ideals—clichés. Both scenes value tradition and rigidity and find comfort in a literal uniformity—it exists in all punk groupings to an extent, but there's a ton of bleed between say, noise, pogo, and D-beat genres. Jah feel?

If you're looking for an attitude adjustment or hardcore with motivated and proactive lyrics (not about acne, but about positive livin'!), PROTEIN delivers the goods, crucially. *"Be who you want, so easy to say / But better than just doing nothing all day / Focus on it give it some heart / Remember the hardest is only the start / Never! Gonna! Back! Down!"* Find the tape at youth2youthrecords.bandcamp.com

***

**THE STANCE – Demo:** Whatta we got here?! Five songs from three Boston baddies playing Stripped down Oi! with deep barked vocals! Is this my favorite kind of Oi! demo? Seems that way. There's a little switch up in the status quo in that the STANCE seem to be sans bass...or maybe it's just the recording? Can't tell. Regardless, it's a scrappy demo that grabs my attention. For fans of BATTALION, the BRASS, COMBAT FORCE, RASPBERRY BULBS, and further rawness. Can't wait for

the vinyl! Until then, grab a copy of the tape here: thestanceoi.bandcamp.com

***

**V/A – *NYC Oi! Fest Vol. 2* CD (United Riot):** This is a live recording from the two day fest that took place in Brooklyn back in May of '16. I was there for the first night but had to skip the second on account of work (skinhead!). It was a great night and well worth the drive out from Pittsburgh. Six out of the twelve bands that played the fest are represented here over the course of twenty-three tracks. You get IRON CITY HOOLIGANS, NO QUARTER, QUEENSBURY RULES, CLOSE SHAVE, OFFENSIVE WEAPON, and BATTLE CRY with their farewell set. The quality is solid and captures the moment—bad riffs and all. This album is a testament to the bands and individuals that made NYC Oi! Fest a success, and who continue to offer a platform for true and unapologetic Oi! in the face of opposition from outsiders and agitators. Pick this up, and then get the LP when it comes out.

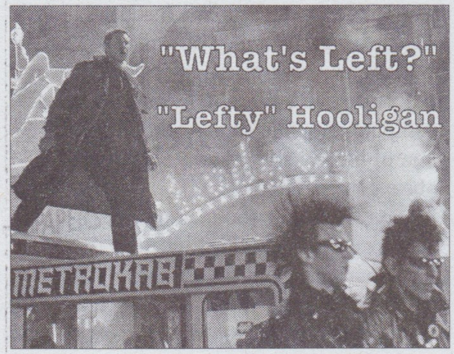
***

That's it! See yinz next month!

**STUFF AT THE BOTTOM:**

1) Even if you don't like Oi! we can still be buds: AmericanBootGang@Gmail.com

2) If you want a multimedia representation of this column or want to see records too risqué for *MRR*, follow me on Instagram: @TurboJorgensen




*Ten like-minded, highly disciplined individuals can outwit and outmaneuver a thousand loosely affiliated individuals every time.*
—Hooligan 300 Rule

Jimmy Carter reinstated draft registration on January 2, 1980, in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. My @ affinity group, Night and Fog Action, called an emergency anti-draft / anti-war meeting at UCSD on January 31. Over 200 people attended, three Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) members among them.

There was a lot of excitement and outrage in the room as people discussed what to do next. After instructive legal and informational presentations, someone suggested we form a new group, Students for Peace (SfP). We proposed future activities and events, but the conversations that followed were quickly derailed. The RCP effectively commandeered the debate with talk of digging capitalism's grave and opposing both American imperialism and Soviet social imperialism. They all had the same political line and similar presentations, supported each other's comments and called on each other in the discussion, and relentlessly pushed their position while attacking those who opposed them. Some of the unaffiliated participants began sympathizing with the RCP's point of view while others quickly and vehemently opposed their brand of ultra-Maoism while still others became increasingly bewildered. Confusion and acrimony reigned. A friend, Eric, confronted a younger RCPer face-to-face in a yelling match that almost descended into a fist fight. We collected addresses and phone numbers for a contact list, then disbanded the meeting with little else accomplished.

A nucleus of frustrated student organizers retired to the UCSD Triton Pub to lick our wounds and regroup. We set up the skeleton of SfP and defined consensus-oriented procedures to insure that the RCP's disruption could not happen again. (It eventually included a proposal for two-thirds vote in case consensus wasn't possible.) Our subsequent meetings were jammed. The RCP and the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) attended, but thanks to our new SfP "rules of order" they failed to dominate or disrupt our meetings. SfP went on to successfully sponsor a February 11 UCSD march and rally that drew 3,000 people.

The RCP's behavior held an inkling of what I call the "Hooligan 300 Rule," where a tiny, highly organized cadre outflanks and defeats a far larger but unorganized foe. It's a tangential reference to the 300 Spartans who held off the entire Persian army in 480 BCE, and it's an example of how the Left often operates behind the scenes to get its way. The following description illustrates this rule, as well as my last column's proverb "the enemy of my enemy is my friend."

When Ronald Reagan won the presidency on November 4, 1980, San Diego's Left was poised to respond. Yet it was an obscure organization, the Committee Against the New Right (CANR), that stepped into the breach. I and two friends put together CANR over our kitchen table one afternoon, having discussed the idea in SfP. First we designed a snazzy logo, a "no right turn" symbol superimposed with a clenched fist. We reserved a community venue, then wrote a press release against the rise of the Weyrich / Viguerie New Right within Reagan's ascendant neoliberal Right, which called for a unified progressive response to Reagan's electoral victory. Two of us were fine graphic artists, so our efforts looked sharp. We took our finished product to a copy shop, made 50 copies, and drove around submitting our press release to local media, organizations, and individuals of note, including the Peace Resource Center's popular progressive calendar.

The next day, when we realized how deep we'd stepped into it, CANR contacted the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) and Committee Against Registration and the Draft (CARD) to ask for help in moderating the meeting we'd called.

Two hundred people attended this March 26, 1981 "general assembly" for a temporary, non-sectarian, multi-issue coalition. We decided on late April dates for anti-Reagan marches and rallies, naming ourselves the April Coalition by default. The meeting formulated a set of demands, the usual general progressive laundry list of issues (An End To Racist And Sexist Violence, Production For Peace Not War, US Out Of El Salvador, Solidaridad Con El Pueblo Mexicano, etc.) They were generic slogans with broad appeal of a mainstream liberal, progressive, and Old Left bent. After a resounding, enthusiastic approval of the demands, a second meeting was scheduled for April 8. When Hinckley attempted to assassinate Reagan on March 30, the Coalition's plans were upended. The smaller second meeting was secretly packed with members and supporters of the SWP and the Maoist Communist Workers Party (CWP) acting in conjunction, who proceeded to run roughshod over the NLG/CARD moderators to ram through their own highly specific demands. The CWP had been organizing at the San Diego NASSCO shipyards and claimed the FBI had entrapped and arrested two members and a sympathizer on charges of conspiracy to pipe bomb electrical transformers. They wanted "Free The NASSCO 3" on the Coalition's demands. As for the SWP, they wanted their own set of demands (Victory To the FMLN, Solidarity With The FSLN, Free Francisco "Kiko" Martinez, etc.) to be included. The CWP / SWP success in replacing the Coalition's demands proved pyrrhic, produced a negative mainstream Left shitstorm, and led to a third April Coalition "general assembly."

CANR was anarchist / independent communist, part of the UCSD radical left scene. We fully supported revolutionary socialism, and were sympathetic in spirit with much of what the CWP / SWP stood for. At the same time, we worked with and had friends who were part of the San Diego mainstream Left, even while we disparaged

their gradualism and reformism. But, bottom line, we were royally pissed at the CWP / SWP's slimy meeting-packing tactics to force their demands on the Coalition. We started organizing against them in the lead up to the April Coalition's *Götterdämmerung*-style third meeting, an example of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." The Coalition's mainstream Left wing was now our friend against the CWP / SWP wing over whether to roll back the list of demands to the original, first meeting version.

The NASSCO 3 Defense Committee invited CANR to meet to "discuss our political differences." Trotsky's meeting with Makhno came to mind when we arrived at a skeevy restaurant at the old Horton Plaza to see NASSCO 3 defendant Rodney Johnson plus four others holding down the back booth. We cut a tentative deal. The CWP agreed to drop their demand from the final set of demands and had prevailed upon the SWP to do the same in exchange for secondary CWP / SWP speakers on the day of and extensive mention of NASSCO 3 and SWP issues in the April Coalition press packet. We agreed to not talk shit about the CWP and SWP or their activities in the April Coalition.

We didn't feel right about the deal even before we left the restaurant. They were promising too much, we were being asked for too little in return, so we suspected we were being played. Plus, we were still angry over the meeting stacking. Later we heard indirectly the SWP had never heard of any deal. We went into full action mode as only a paper tiger organization with excellent graphic design skills could. We put together a kickass propaganda piece giving the five reasons why we supported the rollback to the original list of demands because of the offending Leninist parties' heavy-handed behavior. When we distributed our flyer bearing our brilliant logo before the third meeting, CWP supporters cried foul, claiming we'd violated our promise not to speak ill of the CWP / SWP. Minutes later, the CWP handed out a shoddy, mimeographed leaflet insisting the second meeting's set of demands be approved in full as the Coalition's revolutionary duty.

Three hundred people attended the third meeting April 23. Discussion of the demands was limited to the first hour, to be strictly adhered to given a renewed fidelity to parliamentary process. I won't go into details of the debate over the general vs. specific demands, except to say it was bitter and rancorous. When the *sturm und drang* ended in a contentious vote, with many clenched fists raised on both sides, the mainstream Left won by a comfortable majority. A CWP member took the podium and suggested the meeting required a two-thirds vote to pass the demands rollback motion per the Coalition's "founding documents." I ran down to the podium and read from the paper the CWPer held aloft, pointing out it was only an SfP proposal, not a Coalition rule.

Game over.

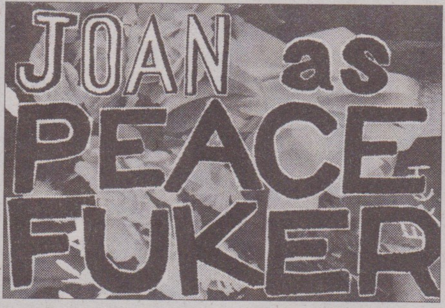
The April Coalition continued under its original demands. I was mercilessly excoriated for betraying my radical leftism. Any further Coalition efforts to organize a broad-based protest to the Reagan administration collapsed from sympathy and sectarianism, with a postponed May 9 march and Peace and Justice Expo mostly limited to the San Diego Left. The Hooligan 300 Rule was born.

PS—The Trotskyist SWP and Maoist CWP also played "enemy of my enemy…" during the April Coalition. Anybody can practice the Hooligan 300 Rule.

PPS—https://library.ucsd.edu/dc/ for digital archives.

***PERSONAL PROPAGANDA***

*Personal blog: gamatiasz.wordpress.com*
*Political blog: leftyhooligan.wordpress.com*
*Facebook page: facebook.com/GAMatiasz*
*Writer Facebook page: facebook.com/GA-Matiasz-1729198467311786*
*Publishing Facebook page: facebook.com/62-Mile-Press-190746624637105*
*Publishing website: 62milepress.com*




A week or so before sending this issue to the printers, *Maximum Rocknroll* finally kicked off the first public phase of our long-awaited Archive Project. I say public, of course, because ever since we received funding from our supporters, we have been hard at work behind the scenes to prepare for our final vision: a comprehensive online database of our record collection and music reviews. Given that *MRR* has been active as a magazine for almost 36 years, this has been no easy task, but we have steadfastly worked to inventory and then reshelve and reorganize our entire record collection.

To say that our archive is massive is an understatement. Not only do we have all of our records (to be precise, 51,300 at the moment), but there are also flyers, zines, photographs, rare demo tapes, and Tim Yohannan's homemade record covers to include. When we first ran our fundraiser for the Archive Project, we knew that digitizing all of our collection would be a time-consuming task. We also knew that our website would need some serious work in order to host the thousands upon thousands of files that we are working hard to digitize.

We are happy to announce that we have finally updated our website! No need to update your bookmarks: maximumrocknroll.com is still our URL. This new website is more than just a much-needed aesthetic makeover (check out the green tape green we use for our links!), but it will also serve as the home base for our Archive Project. By the end of Spring 2018, we will be posting searchable PDF copies of many of our back issues, available for *free*. After some time, we will have our entire record collection online, with quick links to our reviews of those works. That means that you can see what Chris Dodge had to say about ENTOMBED's *Left Hand Path* or what Tim Yo thought of SIN 34's *Do You Feel Safe?* without needing to comb through our individual issues.

There are still a load of kinks to be worked out with our website. If you notice any, please get in touch! We also need help updating our bibliography. If you want to help us build some pages and upload PDFs, please email archive@maximumrocknroll.com.

2018 is going to be a wild year for us—stay tuned for more news from us!

***

Some additional notes:

Miranda has been seriously kicking ass as the new coordinator. She barely had any time to herself before she dove right in to coordinating—she even helped out with our annual Shitworker meeting! I'm very excited to be co-coordinating the magazine with her. Pester her here: miranda@maximumrocknroll.com

We're still looking for a distro coordinator! If you're a business-minded punk (*please*, no right libertarians) who wants to live with the largest punk record collection in the world (and with me and Miranda!) *for free*, get in touch: mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

We need more record reviewers! We're looking for people interested in all sorts of DIY music including pop punk, power pop, hardcore, Oi!, crust, and more. Must live in the Bay Area to be considered. Send a review of something you like, something you dislike, and something that you feel just OK about to: layla@maximumrocknroll.com.

The majority of our regular columnists are on sabbatical right now, so we are looking for more columnists. Got a guest column idea? Have a topic that you regularly want to write about? Pitch it to: columns@maximumrocknroll.com.

Bug me at joan@maximumrocknroll.com.

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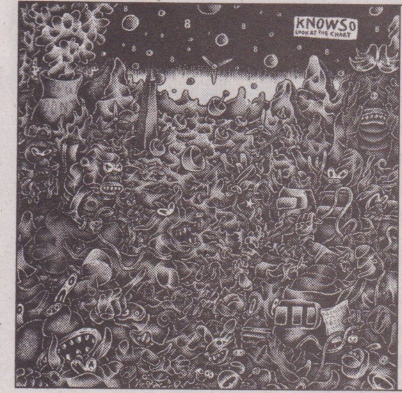
# NECK CHOP RECORDS

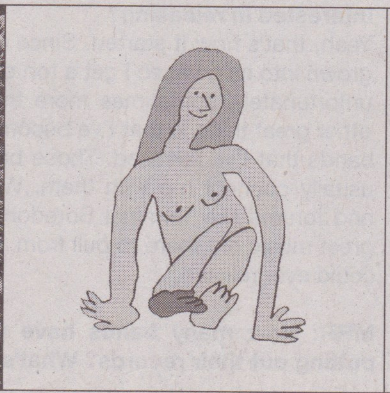
*I still remember the first time I heard of Neck Chop Records. I was flipping through this very same magazine that you are holding in your hands, when I saw an ad promoting not one, but several releases all at the same time. I was a little confused—I had never heard of this label, but already it was pumping out records as if they were one of those old-timey hitmaker labels. From the get-go they seemed omnipresent, both in terms of their releases' popularity and in terms of the size of their distro. It seems as though from the moment they began churning out releases in October 2016 they were (and still are) one of the new big contenders in the world of DIY punk. They released a massive 25 titles in their first year alone, including whoppers from Acrylics, Beta Boys, C.H.E.W., and so much more.*

*This brought up a slew of questions to many American punks. How did this happen so quickly? Who is this person running Neck Chop? Rumors were circulating, some plausible, others totally laughable. One person posited that he was a figure that was unrelated to punk at all, hoping to make a few bucks off of a trend. I heard another person say that he was a formerly successful punk looking to find a way back into the scene. Another punk wasn't even sure he was a real human being, but a program designed to create a DIY label.*

*With all of this talk circulating about Neck Chop, I wanted to know everything, so I reached out to them via email to clear up any confusion. It turns out that Mr. Neck Chop is a regular guy named Brandon Porter, and he was happy to take a break from releasing his fifth wave of releases to dispel all of these rumors and lay down the facts.*

*Introduction and interview by Joan DeToro.*
*Photos by Ben Karpinski*





**MRR: Who *are* you?**
An old man trying to stay young for as long as I can.

**MRR: Can you expand on that? You're a man of mystery!**
There was a time when I was going to shows almost every night, every week. But as I've gotten older, my window of free time has gotten smaller. I've gotten married, I have kids, and I recently got a dog. All of these things require me to be at home more. I'm not complaining at all since I love being a homebody and love my family. However, I've always stayed close to the music I love. As my kids have gotten older and more self sufficient, I knew that I was able to start giving back to the community that gave so much to me and helped mold me into the man I am today.

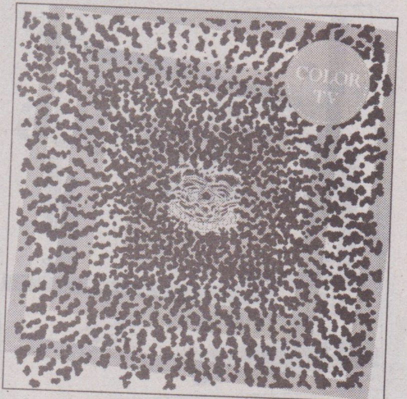
**MRR: How did you start Neck Chop Records?**
It's something that I've always wanted to do ever since I was a kid. I worked at a record store from high school until deep into my 20s, and the goal was to always open one myself. Then life, wife, kids, and other responsibilities came on, and it looked like it was never gonna happen. However, I always stayed close to music and punk / hardcore and kept up with what was going on. Some shit happened in my life a few years back and I had to keep busy, so I randomly sent out a post saying that I was going to start making a mix CD that would take one track from all the records that I purchased the previous month (good or bad) and do a little write-up about it with a link on where to buy it (super fucking nerdy) and if anybody was interested I would send it to them free. The list filled up instantly and it was great. I'd send it out every month to everybody on the list and people were discovering new bands. It was a ton of fun and it almost felt like I was running a record label. During this I was also still ordering new titles for two local record stores. This mix CD series lasted a couple years, and it got to the point where I just felt it was time. I put some stuff up on a webstore and that's how the distro started. The label started at the same time randomly because I sent an email to Daniel in WOODBOOT and asked them if they had any plans to put their first record / demo on vinyl. I told them I had no clue what I was doing and that I'd be learning as I was going and they were on board. Once that started getting into production, I felt that I had to get more lined up. Then everything just started gaining momentum super fast, and here we are. It's still crazy to me how fast all of this happened.

**MRR: Do you primarily email bands whose work you are interested in releasing?**
Yeah, that's how it started. Since then, Neck Chop has kind of grown into its own, so I get a ton of demos on a regular basis—unfortunately, sometimes more than I can keep up with. The other great thing is that I've become very close with a lot of the bands that I've released. Those bands have friends and they'll usually connect me with them. With Bandcamp, Soundcloud, and forums like Terminal Boredom, there is an endless pot of great music out there to pull from. Way more good music than I could ever release.

**MRR: How many bands have you reached out to about putting out their records? What's your response rate usually**

**like? Did these emails generate any memorable conversations?**

I reached out to a ton this first year, but I've slowed down lately, just because I've gotten backed up a bit. It bums me out that I've gotten backed up, because when I started I didn't have any backlog of anything so I was able to talk to bands and we'd agree to do a record and then two or three months later we had a record. Now that I've started to batch the releases together, there's a lot more prep that goes into each round. I try to respond to every email I get, but it gets hard because I'm sure a lot of people think you're making shit up when you tell 'em you're backed up. There's been some good emails between some of the bands that I work with, but some are personal. I've grown pretty close with a lot of these bands, and we talk about stuff outside of our record that we're doing. However, I did get a snail mail letter from some dude in jail. He was getting ready to get out and had written all these songs and wanted to record right when he got out. At first I thought he wanted to record while he was *in* jail, like some Bad Brains "Sacred Love" shit. I'm not sure how he got my info—I'm guessing he's getting copies of *MRR* in there.

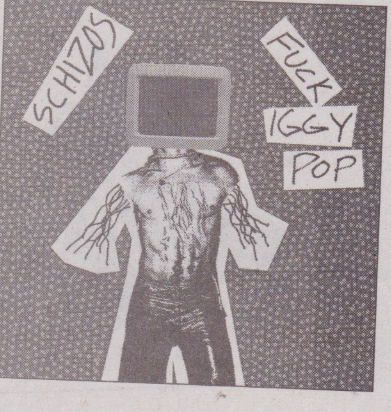



**MRR: How long was your correspondence with the prisoner?**

It was just the one letter he sent me. While I try to email everybody back, I'm terrible with snail mail and talking on the phone. My wife kept telling me to send him a package of zines / books, but time just got away from me. That totally makes me sound like an asshole, I know. That's definitely not the intention. It's just crazy how quickly a day turns into a week, then turns into a month, etc. By that point you just feel like an idiot for not responding, and I'm sure there's some Larry David-esque rule of how much time is too much time to respond to something.

**MRR: Do you personally know many of the artists whose records you've released ?**

When I started releasing the records, I didn't know the artists personally. It's been great, though, because I've become friends with most of them after I start working with them. For instance, Erik Nervous has pretty much become my right hand man. What started as just me being a fan of his music (and the second Neck Chop release) has now turned into him being the Neck Chop Marketing Director. We joke, because there aren't any real job titles here, but what isn't a joke is how much he's helped me and Neck Chop. I'm such a fucking luddite when it comes to technology, and through talking to him I knew he was into graphic design. I asked him if he wanted to do some artwork for the label to help me out so it came to be a win / win. After releasing the Warm Bodies 7" I also learned that Jordan in the band runs a print shop called Oddities Prints. Through him and his staff at the shop, I've been able to hand stuff over and keep everything kinda "in house." It costs a bunch of money to release records so it's great to be able to keep all that money in the family, in a sense. Outside of those releases, I've also become friends with pretty much everybody else that I've released. It's really cool to have different relationships with all these people. The thing I've always told these bands is this is *your label*—I want this to be a family, I want them to be proud to be on Neck Chop. Maybe that's naïve, I don't know. There is also a release coming in 2018 that have been my friends for a very long time.




**MRR: What do you mean by making the label be like a family? What does that look like?**

It means a few things. First, who do you trust more than family? For me, nobody. The main thing I tell the bands is don't fuck me and I won't fuck you. This whole thing is a give / take relationship built entirely on trust. Nobody is making any money in our scene, so our only form of collateral is trust and integrity—which is a good thing. Money brings greed, and greed brings deception. When all we have is our word, it makes you work so much harder. I've always tried to be as transparent as possible with everybody. Second, bands are very incestuous, so they all have a ton of other side projects, solo projects, and other bands that are just as important as the one you may know them from. As an example, when I first started Neck Chop, I reached out to Andy Human to do a Reptoids record. We emailed and talked on the phone for a while and got on the same page to do a record down the road. In the meantime, he kept sending me all this other stuff from the million other bands he was in. I was hooked on all of it! That's how the Beatniks 7" and Jackson Politick LP came about. He also sent me the new Razz LP that's now on Emotional Response, but I was just too backed up at that time. It was a fucking bummer, too, because that record is great, but I was stoked to see it go to a great label. Third, outside of bands they're in, they all have friends in other bands, so our family keeps growing bigger and bigger. Once we've established a relationship, I've always told them they have a home for whatever else they have down the road, as long as I'm not backed up (or can wait until I'm not backed up). But if that doesn't work out, it's not like there's hard feelings about it. I love seeing their music out there, whether it's on Neck Chop or some other label—like a proud parent or older brother.

**MRR: I was reading *Cretins of Distortion* #10 today, and one criticism, in my interpretation, that they had of your label (which I've heard other people also parrot) is of your eagerness**

**to press demo cassettes to vinyl. The impression I get of their argument is that they view it as opportunistic on some level...But on the other hand, the bands approves of these repressings. A lot of demos, if they have a physical release, are only available in runs of a couple hundred tapes at most, and the majority of them end up going to the band or friends of the band. What's your reasoning behind releasing demos on vinyl?**

Yeah, I saw that too. Maybe I'm naive but I didn't take it as me being opportunistic, I took it more as I've been releasing *too many* records (which is criticism I've heard before). Either way, I get that it was a jab and that's fine since they're entitled to their opinion. I think to answer this honestly, there are multiple layers to this. First and foremost, I love demos. There is a rawness to a demo that is impossible to duplicate. I remember being a kid and *loving* Bad Brains. I thought that first 7" and first album were some of the best records ever and I'm thankful for how they changed my life. Then I remember when *Black Dots* came out and it blew my mind. To this day, I still think *Black Dots* is the best Bad Brains record and is way better than the self-titled album. There is something so primal, aggressive, and honest from that session that I don't think was captured as well on any of their other records. Not to say the other records are bad at all, but they are different.

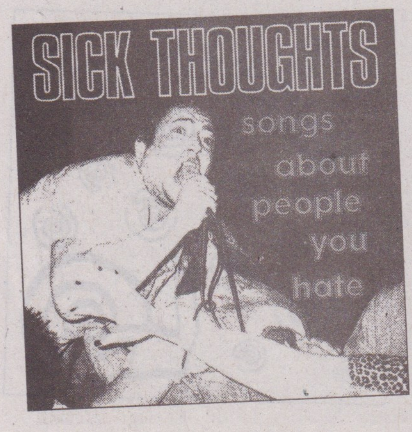
I fully understand there are a ton of people who love this new restored tape culture. I'm not one of those people. However, I get it. With the price of vinyl compared to the price of cassettes—it makes sense. But to think that it's out on cassette and not needed elsewhere is limiting the prospective audience. Or worse yet, creating a terrible culture where people are paying $100 on discogs for a demo cassette that came out a couple months ago just because it's not available anywhere else. I prefer vinyl, I always have. If I have a chance to hear something I like and remaster that same session to release it on vinyl then I'm all for it.

In that same write-up in *Cretins* they said, "Great music and great art should exist for everyone. They should have an appeal that has the ability to reach beyond any community and culture." I completely agree with this statement, but rather than just *saying* it, I'm *doing* something about it. I'm doing my part in trying to bring as much of this music to more ears rather than a small group of people who only listen to tapes, YouTube, or bandcamp. Later this year I have two compilations coming out highlighting tape labels (Discontinuous Innovation and Abnormal Broadcasting) and those guys (and the bands) are pumped on these releases. I hope people snag these records and realize there are some great tape labels out there putting out killer demos and possibly do some more.

Anybody that thinks this is being opportunistic has a very narrow view of how this all really works. I'm not making any money on this, at all. I'm doing this strictly for the love of music. I always thought In The Red was a great name for at label for the face value of the meaning but now that I have my own label I realize that it's a double entendre.

**MRR: Do you have any record labels that you look up to? Did you model your label after any other label?**

There's a ton! My whole method of how I release records is derived from how Todd at HoZac and Gabriele at Goodbye Boozy release their records. While it's really hard to batch everything together, in the end I think it's best for people buying records. Over time, you hope people will trust your taste and just snag everything you put out each batch. While it kind of sucks if there is some delay because your label could be silent for a few months, there are so many outlets to stay connected with people to let them know what you're working on. I'm not sure if I'll be able to do it like this forever, but I'm gonna try. I've also been a longtime fan of Goner. They've been doing this so long and are still in the upper echelon of labels / stores. There's also the obvious comparisons of Neck Chop to Rich at Total Punk and Marty at Lumpy. I have similar taste in music to those guys, so there are some shared values there, because we've released records of some of the same bands. When I first started, I asked a million questions to a bunch of people, and all were super helpful in getting started. Two other labels / people that have been great resources for me are Nat at Radiation / Puke N Vomit and Joey at 6131. Nat owns the record store, Radiation, by my house, and that's a second home for me. I know 6131 Records is totally the opposite of what I listen to or release, but Joey has been one of my best friends for a long time. We both worked at a record store, Bionic Records, a long time ago, then became roommates at the 6131 house. That was one of the most fun times of my life. Our music tastes are polar opposites, but our love of music is the same. He's been doing his label for ten years now, so he's been able to help me with a ton of stuff. You could also say he helped me press my first record before Neck Chop. When my wife and I got married, our wedding invites were blank 7" records that we sent out to everybody. He set all of that up for us, and they came out great.




**MRR: Using blank 7"s for wedding invitations is a really cute idea. But it made me think of the different methods current record labels are doing to try to get attention and drum up**

**sales. A lot of labels are going out of their way to make unique records, such as the Perfect Pussy LP with singer Meredith Graves's blood in it, or the Jack White *Lazaretto* LP. Would you ever do something similar for your own releases?**
Yeah, all of that stuff is pretty interesting, but I feel as long as you put out music that you like and are passionate about, people will take notice. The price of vinyl / records is already way too high, so it doesn't need any help pushing up the prices even more with tricky or unique pressings. I stay away from "limited color" versions because I'm always worried about the label attracting the wrong people (flipper scum). I do have test presses with alternate artwork, mostly done by Erik Nervous, that we give to the band and myself, but those are mostly just for us. However, I'm a little backed up right now, so I've been printing up some extras for the bands that have been waiting a while for their record to come out so they can have those for shows while we wait for the real thing. The Jack White thing I get. They have their own pressing plant now, so they can mess around with all pressings, since they're not paying a middle man. If I was in that situation, maybe I'd be more open to it.

**MRR: Can you share some of the advice, both good and bad, about starting a record label that you received from the other label owners?**
Be honest with people. This seems like a simple statement, but you'd be amazed with how hard that is for some people. Sometimes I'm a bit too transparent and share too much. If you remain honest, something as little as a "thanks," they will know you meant it, rather than seeing it as a standard cordial formality. Don't do "pre-orders" with your own releases or distro items. There are too many things that can go wrong if you do that. Don't be greedy. If you're lucky enough to have a record in a feeding frenzy (either distro or your own label), don't fuck people over. I always applaud the stores that have some of those instantly high priced items, either for Record Store Day or not, and stick to their standard margins. It sucks if it goes to some douche buying it to flip, but you'll be able to sleep at night knowing you're not scum like that fuck. If it doesn't feel right, don't do it. If you've got an uneasy feeling about the band, music, or people, then trust your instincts. Reward your customers. It takes a *lot* of work to get people to keep coming back to you. Everybody has different financial situations, and if you're lucky enough to have them spend their money at your store / label, then give them something a little extra when you can.

**MRR: What's up next for Neck Chop?**
We had a crazy first year, and I plan to keep it going at that speed this year. We've already got a stacked 2018 with LPs coming out from Erik Nervous, Liquids, SBF, Judy and the Jerks, Nosferatu, Neo Neos, Kool 100s, Lost System, and Isotope Soap. We've got 7"s coming out from Kid Chrome, Lysol, Stiff Love, Wet Ones, Natural Man, Spodee Boy, Suburban Homes, Trampoline Team, and Baby's Blood. We're also going to try something else and do a couple compilation LPs of some really great tape labels (Discontinuous Innovation and Abnormal Broadcasting), and I'm hoping we can do some more after that with some other tape labels. There's a bunch of other things in the works, but all of those are either ready to go or almost ready to go. As long as people keep staying excited about new music, then I'll do my best to keep cranking 'em out.

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# RATA NEGRA

## THE ECHOES OF DEBRIS

*Rata Negra was born in Madrid in 2014. Pablo is extremely (and I would like to emphasize extremely) organized. He has everything under control at all times, and that shows in his drums. He gives the songs a structure as if he were a machine matching them with their own timing. The dark and gloomy landscapes from Fa's drawings take over his guitar, making those aggressive and decadent melodies. Violeta continues to improve on the bass and takes the mic. Watch it. Her point of view, always ironic and caustic, describes her most turbulent obsessions in a bold way, spitting bile all around her. When the three of them get on stage, the night fills with black rats.*

*I can't be impartial with Rata Negra. Why would I be? I've been following the band since their first practice. We've played together, been out to eat, dance and to the movies to watch the new Blade Runner sequel, which, in my opinion, was quite long for my focusing abilities, but I still liked it. I know them well, that's for sure, but that's not what made me say to them "Hey, I'd like to interview you for MRR!" Not at all. I did it 'cause I'm a Rata Negra fan. A real one. Few new bands have managed to obsess me as much as they have.*

*I needed to do this interview.*

*Introduction and interview by Héctor Sudor.*
*Translation by Blanca García. Photos by Miguel Martin.*

**MRR: Well, first question, where is Fa?**
Violeta: Fa is flying to Thailand right now, on his way to a paradise beach.
Pablo: He is on his honeymoon.

**MRR: Your album *Oído Absoluto* is really awesome. Are you happy about the result?**
Violeta: No.
Pablo: Well, the record ended up better than we expected because the mixing was living hell.
Violeta: The record is pretty badly recorded and not well mixed, but all in all the result isn't so bad.
Pablo: We've been playing most of the songs for a while, but there are two or three that we created at the end to have a well rounded record. It was recorded in eleven hours.

**MRR: And mixed in eleven months?**
Pablo: Four.
Violeta: I think that what happened at the end was that they were good songs, and even though they were poorly recorded and mixed people like them. Maybe it wouldn't be as cool if it sounded better.
Pablo: Well, come on, if you compare it with other records of the same style it is not so bad...

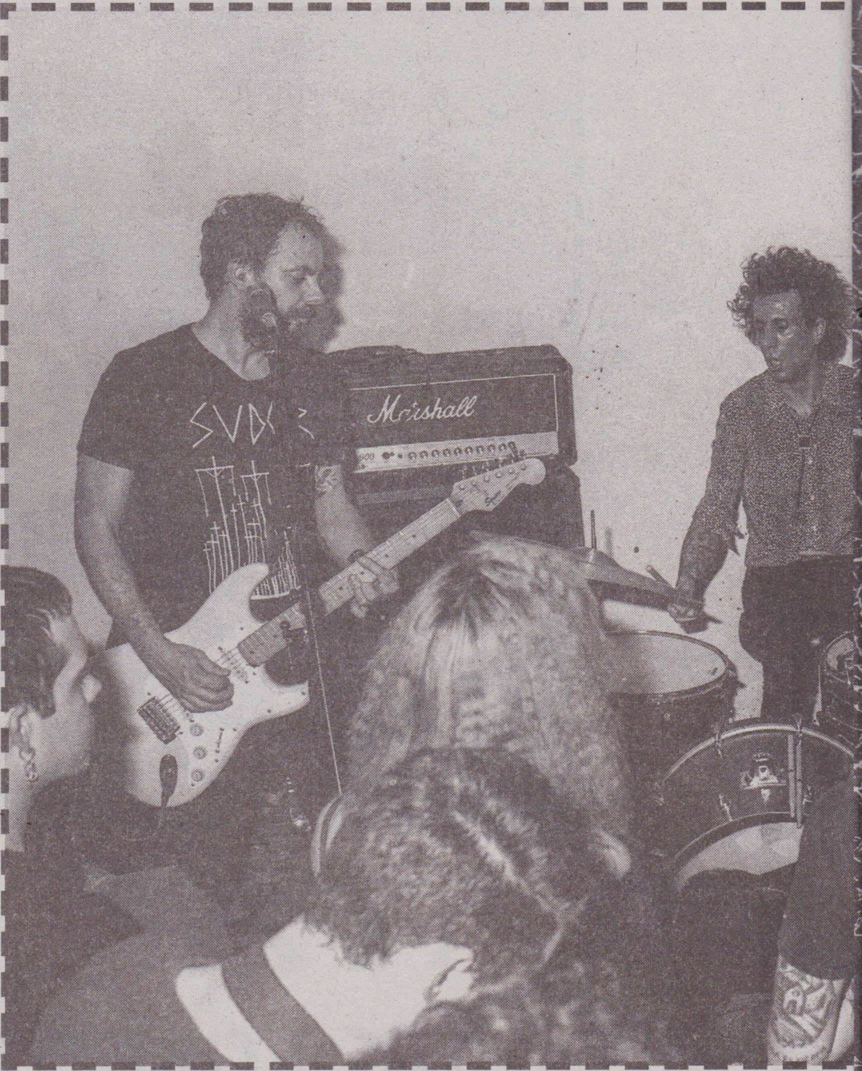
**MRR: I have *oído absoluto*, perfect pitch, and I think it sounds pretty good. What's your favorite song? For me it has been changing. I used to like "Ratas" best, then "Lo Oscuro," and now my favorite is "Aguas Negras."**
Pablo: "Aguas Negras" was the most hated track before we recorded it, so I'm glad to go on record to say how much I like it—both my bandmates were picking on that song.
Violeta: I always liked it!
Pablo: They didn't like it because they said it was very much in the vein of Juanita y los Feos, Violeta and Fa's previous project.
Violeta: And that's true, it feels like JYLF.
Pablo: I've always said that the most hated songs end up being the best ones. The public will prove me right, as they always have.

**MRR: I think that if the favorite song changes, that means it's a good record.**
Violeta: I used to like "Aguas Negras" most, but I really like playing "Gente" because the crowd loves to sing the line "*si tuviera un fusil...*" ("*if I had a shotgun*") and it's really fun. Fa hates it.

**MRR: Yes, maybe people stick to the jokes.**
Violeta: The more you make a fool of yourself, the happier people are.
Pablo: I couldn't say which is Fa's favorite.
Violeta: Fa hates them all.
Pablo: Fa hates the whole record. He records an album and the next day he hates it. *[laughter]*

**MRR: Do you have new songs?**
Pablo: Half a new album.
Violeta: Seven.

**MRR: How often do you push them out?**
Violeta: A song every two months.




Pablo: Well, because there's always some little setback, a long weekend, a holiday...

**MRR: And is there a big hit among those seven?**
Violeta: I think that at first listen there could be more than on the other record. We had the feeling on *Oído Absoluto* that there were no hits. After a while we learned to love it, but we felt there wasn't any song that you could say "Oh yeah, *this* is the song!" On the new record, we think that they are all hits. Maybe the truth is that it sucks!
Pablo: Each song is different from the other on the new record. Fa has a theory, because he has experienced it before, that in the end, when you make a record with so much variety it ends up being a good record. It is normal to have the feeling that what you're doing makes no sense, but that's not true.

**MRR: I have the feeling that Rata Negra is one of those bands that in addition to punk, listens to other music that isn't punk at all, and not only do you listen to it but you're also influenced by it.**
Violeta: Well, I think that Pablo listens to more punk, but I listen all kinds of music.

**MRR: Nowadays you see a punk band and it is really easy to categorize it because normally they repeat something that has already been done. Everything has its place. I think that**

**what's cool about Rata Negra is that it is something new, something in its own. I think that's what happened with the first punks, they didn't listen to punk music because they were somehow inventing it, so they listened to other stuff and that's how they were original. When you listen to Rata Negra you notice that it's not a dogmatic band, closed, that you have all kinds of influences.**
Violeta: I've never listened to just punk. I mean, I really like punk music, I could say it is my favorite, but I've always listened to all kinds of stuff. In fact if you've ever been to Paraiso de Mierda [the name that Violeta uses when DJing] and you've listened to what we play, it could vary from Las Grecas to Lady Gaga.

**MRR: So, what's your new hit? Say the name!**
Pablo: There is no name yet.

**MRR: How do you name the songs? By the chorus?**
Violeta: No, we try not to use what's said in the chorus. Fa always wants it to be a little twisted.
Pablo: Like "Ratas Negras."
Violeta: True, the song "Ratas" was called "Ratas Negras," but "Aguas Negras," "Ratas Negras"...
Pablo: We couldn't call both things "Negras" so at the end it was just "Ratas." I think the new hit is "Asesino." "Encerrada"...
Violeta: I like "Asesino" and "El Chico de las Estrellas".

**MRR: Two of Rata Negra's members are the brains behind Juanita y los Feos. Fa writes the melodies and Violeta the lyrics; do you see a big difference composing for this band?**
Violeta: I think that when we decided that Juanita y los Feos was truly dead, somehow we ended a self-imposed writers' block. Co-authoring during the time when both bands existed was difficult. We tried to do something different, but it always came out sounding very similar. When we decided that we were free to do the same style without any kind of reservations is when we really started to do something different.

**MRR: Let me clarify, your Juanita y los Feos lyrics used to talk about things that you came up with on the fly, things that were funny...**
Violeta: Yeah, the easy joke.

**MRR: And over time, you are more focused on things that...**
Pablo: ...obsess her.
Violeta: Yes, but I don't really like that. Sometimes I would like to go back to the easy joke—it was so much easier to write like that—but I think that right now I'm at a point in my life that I feel so angry that is really hard to compose like back then.
Pablo: I think that it's a degree of maturity.
Violeta: Ugh! No, please, don't say that word.
Pablo: It might be disgusting, but it is the fucking reality. The same happened with La URSS. We started with the easy joke, and then...
Violeta: Anyways, we're still composing in the same way. Fa does these things that we call "*rendereds*," which is the song as he thinks about it but on 8 bits, some crappy midi songs that he does at his computer at home so he can show it to us, and from there we figure out the rest. So I listen to it in the car, cause I spend a fucking lot of time each day in a traffic jam, and I start thinking about the lyrics. So you see? Where's the joke about being trapped in a car hating all humankind on your way to work? There isn't one. So the easy joke is fucked up. Today, for example, I tried to go back to the joke but I got something sarcastic instead, something a little twisted.
Pablo: So the thing about maturity is true. I know, it is disgusting—you could call it what you want, but it is there and it's the ugly truth.

**MRR: Pablo, you're one of my favorite present punk drummers and Rata Negra's songs wouldn't be the same without your nerve at the drum set. But I also think that you improve when you try to do something simpler. You've played in several bands like La URSS, Nueva Autoridad Democrática, La Fe and Rata Negra. Do you play differently in each band?**
Pablo: With Nueva Autoridad Democrática, I tried to make it more amphetaminic and violent. That was the formula. Some kind of mix of Motörhead with Discharge and Espasmodicos. La URSS is something more poetic. I've always been told that it has some hints of flamenco, I've never understood why, but it might be true.

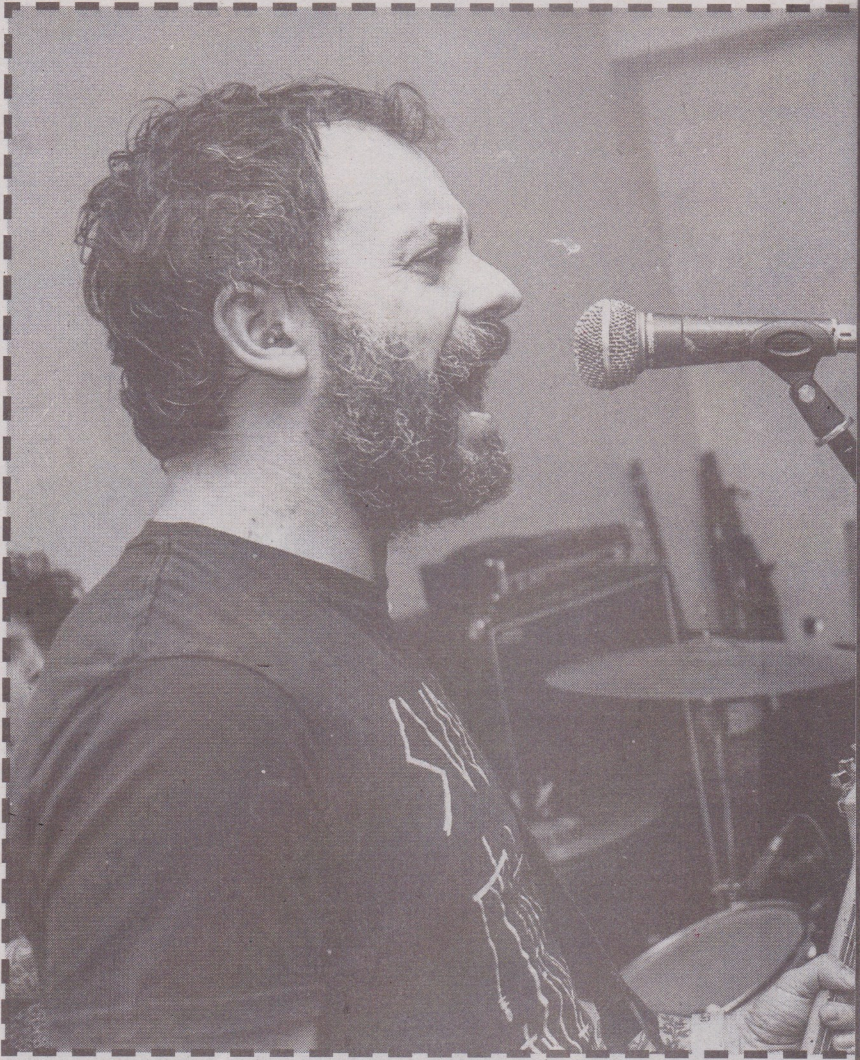
Violeta: Pablo, dude...
Pablo: Yeah, I guess it is true. But when a person who doesn't like punk tells you that the rhythm sounds like flamenco music...I'm not talking about a song in particular, in individual songs it's possible that it sounds like that. With Rata Negra I was a little bit lost at the beginning. I'm used to being guided by the bass, and when we started playing, Violeta didn't know how to play. So when I don't feel safe I start doing tons of meaningless crap, but as I gain confidence I start playing in a more forceful way. Violeta has improved a lot, we've been playing a lot—in the end, that's what makes a band improve. You can practice all you want, but in the end, when you play live is when you realize what works and what doesn't work.

**MRR: Violeta, you love singing without playing. And there was a time in Rata Negra when you thought about the possibility of getting a bass player so you could focus on singing...**
Violeta: Yes.

**MRR: But you refuse.**
Violeta: Well, it was my idea at first, but when everybody agreed I found it really offensive and I got really pissed. *[laughter]* When they saw that I didn't know how to play bass, they said, "she's right, why don't we get someone who's better?" So I was like "Oh, so you think that I'm not capable of playing? Now I don't want anyone but me on the bass." I had a hard time learning; it was a nightmare. It sucks to sing and play at the same time. Now I feel better 'cause I've loosened up, but I had a terrible time. For real, before going up on stage I would say, "Why am I doing this?" and had a terrible time. However, when I only had to sing, I would say "How fun!"
Pablo: Adding to that—they came from Juanita y los Feos, who were super experienced musicians, and I came from La URSS and Nueva Autoridad Democrática, who are also super experienced. Starting with a new band, when we ran into difficulties we thought, "maybe if we get someone more experienced these would sound completely different." Now we feel really happy about how the shows turn out. Besides, being only a three-piece means we get more money at payout. *[laughter]*

**MRR: In your other bands and also in Rata Negra, you've always given great importance to your artwork, but not only on the records, also the way you look on stage.**
Violeta: You can't get out there in a tracksuit.

**MRR: So we could say that Rata Negra has a presence on stage. What is your opinion about the need to take care of that presence? Is it necessary?**
Pablo: This is the typical question that people are going to read and think that we're nuts, but the truth is that even Fugazi...
Violeta: Fugazi? What a crappy example!
Pablo: Well, Fugazi because of their unflinching appearance. All the bands had their attire, even



if they were freaks, rockers, or junkies, like Eskorbuto. All the bands have their own way to dress, and if you play in your slippers and shorts from Malaga's Football Club it isn't going to matter how good you are...
Violeta: It is a part of playing live. If you're not excited about playing, if you're not excited enough to think about what are you going to wear and dress up a little bit, then you're bored of it, and the people who are there to watch you are also going to get bored.
Pablo: To get on stage, you have to believe in what you're doing, and if you don't, you'd better get off.
Violeta: Well but all this also causes a dichotomy for me, 'cause I hate being judged by the look. For example, now that we're getting older, to what extent can you look good being a certain age? And that's fucked up, and I think that it's even worse when you're a woman. And I don't want to be controversial or anything, but it's true that when you are a woman and you get on stage people tend to look at you in a different way, and if you're old, people are not going to pay attention to how you're dressed or even if what you're singing is good or not, they pay attention to the fact that you're old. We always get judged by our appearance and that's a stigma that unfortunately is always going to be there. Also, it is hard to be old and cool.

**MRR: You think so?**
Violeta: The only people who are old and cool are Dead Moon,

RIP Fred Cole.
Pablo: Well, and the Cramps were also cool.

**MRR: But I think that's because they're people that have always been active, they do what they want.**
Violeta: Yes, that could be it, people who have never stopped making things.
Pablo: And not only making things, they never stopped believing in what they were doing. That's the key to a lasting stage presence.

**MRR: Dead Moon probably wouldn't give a shit about what people think.**
Violeta: Totally, yes. And when I speak about being cool on stage, I don't mean being cool for the people, but being cool for yourself. I've never given a fuck about what people think, but you have to be happy with yourself.
Pablo: It's about conviction. You have to be sure about what you do and who you do it with.

**MRR: Which groups do you think have great stage presence?**
Pablo: Well, old ones: Eskorbuto, RIP, Discharge, they had it all.
Pablo: The Damned, totally! They also had it all until '89. And current bands...Sudor, maybe...
Violeta: You're such a kiss-ass. We all know Sudor wears tracksuits on stage. *[laughter]*

**MRR: We have a presence?**
Pablo: Today we had this same conversation with a friend from Valencia who went to see Lumpy and the Dumpers, and other than being pretty plain, they have a greater presence than most other D-beat bands that are really dressed up.
Violeta: It's not about the way they dress, it is that they all have a great and unique personality.
Pablo: They're real. They're from the Midwest, and the Midwest is real.

**MRR: Of course, presence is not how you dress.**
Pablo: It's your attitude, how you live and perform.
Violeta: Yeah, Hank Wood and the Hammerheads are really cool to watch.
Pablo: Yes, and the Cramps!
Violeta: Yes, I really like current bands better, it is difficult to catch that essence just watching YouTube videos, but of course, the Ramones.

**MRR: Totally.**
Pablo: Yes, yes, yes.
Violeta: And right now I really like La Plata. They put a big effort into what they do—they dance, they look good, and they have matching outfits.
Pablo: Yes, La Plata, for example, even though they play pop, they are very active. They've been playing for a year, but they take it really seriously, and that's super cool.

**MRR: Storytelling is really important to me, and Violeta is one of my favorite writers. Not only for her cutting lyrics where she can say a lot by saying a little, but also for her bitterness, cruel criticism, and the irony in her lyrics. How do you choose the subjects you write about?**
Violeta: I don't know. Actually, I'm having a crisis 'cause I feel like I always talk about the same things: death, time, sadness, work, the past. I find it really difficult to find new subjects to talk about. I always write from hate, and I can't find another way.

**MRR: Would you like to write from...?**
Violeta: From love. Something happy.
Pablo: We need a ballad.
Violeta: But for me, making something that doesn't come out naturally makes no sense, right? It's like the song I told you before—the one I was writing in traffic. I think about a sentence and I say, "cool!"

**MRR: What was it about?**
Violeta: It is about that person who makes you cringe when you feel embarrassed for them. I think that feeling is really fucked up—nobody talks about it.

**MRR: Do you think the first walking ape made the others cringe?**
Violeta: Probably. Probably everybody else saw it and was like, "Oh look at that asshole walking, let's look the other way, oh my god!"
Pablo: Well, but it depends, 'cause maybe the ape believed it was the the shit and was like "Hey,

here I am and I'm the coolest ape!" 'Cause at the end all of them ended up walking.

**MRR: Violeta, you're a big fan of horror movies. Does that influence your lyrics?**
Violeta: I don't think so...
Pablo: She's never in her life written about a film.

**MRR: And you, Pablo, I know you hate horror films, but I heard that you might be starting to like them.**
Violeta: He said that to you?!

**MRR: I know it.**
Violeta: Well, well, he never said that to me!
Pablo: It's not like that, it's that I have to see some of them even If I don't want to.
Violeta: The other day he put on his headphones while I was watching one!
Pablo: Because it was really boring. They only talked about ten minutes in an hour and a half!
Violeta: It was really scary. Well, I never thought about it but, obviously, one of the subjects I talk about the most is death. I'd say it is one of my obsessions, 'cause it is so present in your life, and yet you don't know anything about it. And horror films are about people dying, so maybe it has something to do with my lyrics, but I never thought about it before.

**MRR: I think that one of your more scary songs is "Dejalo Ir."**
Violeta: Well...but that's not about death. Nobody gets what that song is about.

**MRR: Yes, it is about how society pushes you to be a mother.**
Violeta: Yes!

**MRR: And I think it is a really unaddressed topic rarely covered in punk lyrics, or any for that matter.**
Violeta: So true. It's taboo and a fucked up subject and more so when you're a certain age. I talk about it without being obvious. In fact, it was really funny when somewhere somebody wrote that it was one of my most nihilistic songs. That made me laugh. But I also like to leave my songs open for interpretation.

**MRR: And "Aguas Negras"? That song might be totally open to interpretation, but for me it is totally like a horror movie.**
Violeta: When I was little, I thought that you could run into a dead body at anytime. I thought that happened to everybody.
Pablo: Yes, like when you're little and you think that everybody wins the lottery at some point.

**MRR: I've never thought that.**
Pablo: Well I did.
Violeta: I thought that you went in the woods and you would find a corpse. I used to spend my summers in Galicia, in northwestern Spain, and we always went to swim in the river. The water was really dark, where there was no sun it was almost black. You are swimming and you don't see what's below, only when you look through your shadow you see the bottom. I always imagined I would see a body, and then I was really scared and would come running out of the water.

**MRR: And now you see crayfish instead.**
Pablo: Yes, that sucks. Those are an invasive species from the Americas. In Andalucía we have the same problem.
Violeta: Yes, the American crayfish have conquered us. Now if there were a body in the water it would've been eaten by the crawdads.

**MRR: Watch out! This is an interview for *MRR!* *[laughter]* You also like to read—what are you reading right now?**
Pablo: I'm reading *Ghosts* by Chuck Palahniuk
Violeta: I've been reading over a long period of time *Clothes Clothes Clothes. Music Music Music. Boys Boys Boys.* by Viv Albertine, but every time I try to read about punk I get really bored. All those books are really boring to me. I've read *Please Kill Me, We Got the Neutron Bomb, Lexicon Devil,* and I always get bored. I really prefer narrative books or even science fiction, but, well, with my job I don't have much time for reading.

**MRR: And you, Pablo, like all that Crowley shit.**
Pablo: Yes, last year I got hooked on occultism. I read Crowley's autobiography—it's like 700 pages...It was pretty intense. I also read *The Book of the Law*, an edition from the '90s that is a transcription of all the rituals he did in Egypt.

**MRR: Fa did the cover of the album. To me, playing and drawing are exactly the same: no technique at all, both of them help me to tell a story. Is it the same for Fa?**
Pablo: The cover is not only Fa's. It is by Croke Studios, where he works with Gonzalo. In fact, until recently we thought that it was only him working on it, but he said that they started drawing one on each side until they came together in the center.

**MRR Like Lady and the Tramp eating spaghetti.**
Violeta: I think Fa's philosophy is opposite to yours. Fa also tries to communicate drawing, but makes it as complicated as possible.

**MRR: OK, that's interesting, for example I see the**

drawings and listen to the music of Jose Atomizador and they are totally related—and I also see that with Fa's work, and I imagine that others see the same with mine.**
Violeta: Yes, Héctor, you are so simple.
Pablo: I think the shyness and insecurity that Fa might have in some aspects is somehow channeled through his drawings and music. And I know lot of people like that who express their talent through creation.
Violeta: His way of composing and drawing are very personal. I don't know if they are as connected as yours or Jose's, but I think they are both very particular.

**MRR: All three of you have been playing, recording, touring for a shitload of time and you keep on doing it. Why? What does it provide you? Because, obviously, you're not going to make a living out of it.**
Violeta: Well, even though I like my job, the whole going to work concept is bullshit, and I think that if the only thing I did in my life was working, I would be very sad. I think you must have a hobby, something you like to do, something you are passionate about so you can hold on to that and have a life apart from the job that keeps you enslaved.
Pablo: But you think about it now that you're an adult and it's time to work and work until you retire, but when I started playing when I was 17...
Violeta: When I started playing, I was already working.
Pablo: But you were 20! I started La URSS with Miguel when I was younger, and we've been playing together since. We were avoiding reality and we wanted to prove everyone that in Andalucía there were also things going on, and pretty good things. Hate is what always kept us going.

**MRR: Hate kept you going, or was it love?**
Pablo: Well, hate for people and love for what we do.

**MRR: I think that if it were only hate you would be absolutely burned out.**
Pablo: Getting away to different cities has made us good, that's for sure.

**MRR: Sure, but that's also what we talked about before, being active. It is very difficult to stay active. Especially when you live far apart, in different cities, all the shit you deal with—because you deal with tons of shit—but still, you keep playing and putting out records and touring. I think that's because you really must love what you do.**
Violeta: Of course, but I understand what Pablo says. Music is a very easy media to express your hate. And it is totally accepted by society and people even listen to it and laugh. I've always felt the need to be constantly doing things, all the time. It is my way out. I need to

produce things. There are people who are fine with watching TV or reading or consuming things that other people do, but I've always felt the need to create things. Regardless if people later consume them or not. I don't give a fuck. It is my personal need.
Pablo: I talked about this same thing the other day with Sam from Crazy Spirit and Dawn of Humans, and he was saying "I'm tired of playing, touring, but still there is something in my head that tells me...do it, do it, do it." You might be exhausted and only have one free weekend a month, and you still manage to complicate your life going out to play a show or something.
Violeta: Also, I've gotten to a point that I wouldn't leave my house if it weren't for this. It's true. Going out bores me to death. Nothing new comes out of going out at night. You're seeing the same people from the last fifteen years and listening to the same music playing at the bars. My only motivation to go out is to play a show or to see someone I like playing, otherwise I would be stuck at home.

**MRR: Music is saving you from Diogenes Syndrome.**
Violeta: It might be. I used to hoard tons of shit when I was younger, but not anymore.

**MRR: You've always hosted bands on tour, and while touring yourself, you've stayed at people's homes. Could you make a manual on how to behave properly while staying at someone's home?**
Pablo: Common sense, it's having basic manners.
Violeta: Well, I know that the people who stay over, if they don't have a towel, they are probably going to use mine to wipe their asses. I know, and I understand. I've done the same at other people's homes. It sucks, yeah, but that's the way it is.
Pablo: Yeah, it's no big deal. You just wash the towels and that's it.
Violeta: Exactly. You just swear about it and wash the towels. You know that next weekend more people will come wipe their asses with your fresh towels, but as long as they're nice to you...The problem is when somebody wipes their ass and they are assholes.
Pablo: It happened.
Violeta: Yes, and in the end it is not about manners, because I understand that bands don't pay attention to those things when they're touring, but at least you could be nice.
Pablo: When I was first touring, at 19 or 20, I tried to be polite, but you don't realize that you can be annoying to someone in their home even when you're being nice. You realize that over time, and even more as you host people yourself.

**MRR: Imagine that a reader from *MRR* comes to visit Spain and you have to recommend the following:**

**A store.**
Violeta: La Negra.
Pablo: La Negra is a great record store, you can find really good local records.

**MRR: A bar.**
Violeta: At Vallecas, I don't know its name—
Pablo: They're two. Bar las Águilas y el Parames.
Violeta: It's like an old people's bar where you can eat Andalucía's style of fried fish, and it's even better than in Triana.
Pablo: Don't exaggerate. I say those two and El Blanco at El Rastro, and Cervecería Arganzuela, also in El Rastro.

**MRR: A place to visit**
Violeta: Seven Tits park.
Pablo: Yes, Siete Tetas in Vallecas.

**MRR: A person to meet.**
Violeta: You, no doubt.

**MRR: Thanks.**
Pablo: Or Dani Mortaja.

**MRR: A band to see.**
Violeta: Sudor, even though they're from Toledo.
Pablo: A pop band, Sierra.

**MRR: The other day, speaking to Jose Atomizador, we were discussing how there's people that evolve and others that get beat down. I mean that instead of changing over the years, they ended up being exactly the same, but more decrepit because of the passing of time.**
Pablo: I call that not being able to get recycled.

**MRR: I think that this way of being also shows in the bands you're in. I'm aware that I've been beaten down, how do you see yourselves?**
Violeta: I've been beaten down 'cause they forbid me to talk about death any further.
Pablo: I don't want to be cocky, but I evolve.
Violeta: Pablo is in the prime of life.

**MRR: Then how does Rata Negra evolve?**
Violeta: I think that the band is evolving by sounding more like Juanita y los Feos over time.
Pablo: Yes and no.
Violeta: I think that it was cool to get rid of the burden of not having to sound like Juanita y los Feos, 'cause I felt a little inhibited by that in the way. I felt I must be doing something I didn't knew how to do, and now I do what I feel again. I don't care what it sounds like.
Pablo: We had this conversation, and Fa didn't know or wasn't sure what the sound would be for the new record, and we told him not to overthink it. We're going to do what we do, no matter what it sounds like.
Violeta: But it's true that we try really hard not to sound like the beaten down kind. We try not to repeat ourselves. It is a constant struggle not to repeat what's already been done.
Pablo: We always try to improve what we've done before.
Violeta: Often we're jamming and writing new stuff and we'll say "no, this sounds just like that other song," so we change it.

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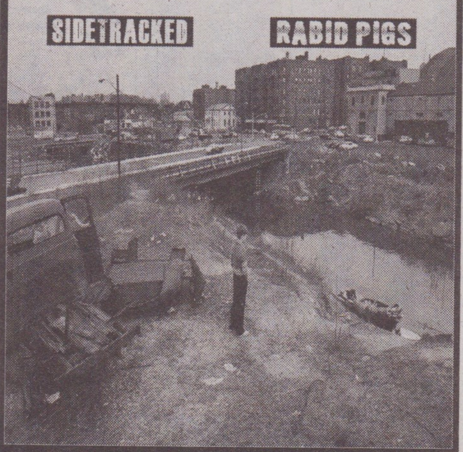


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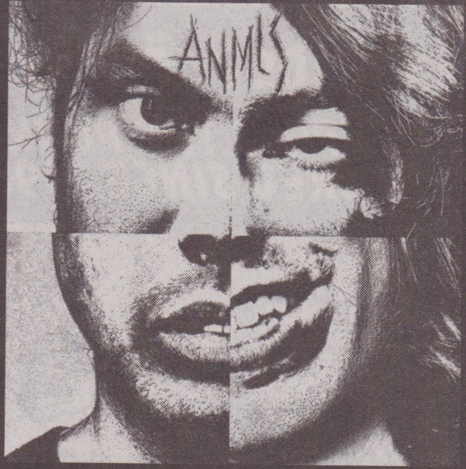


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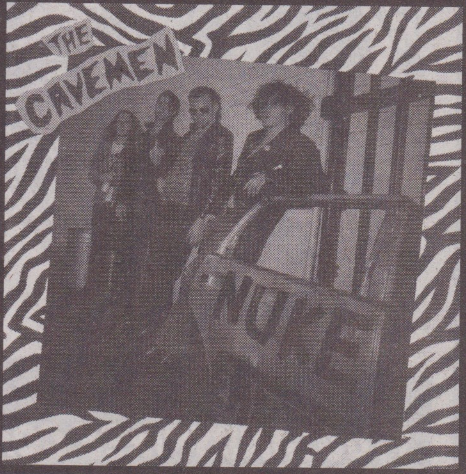


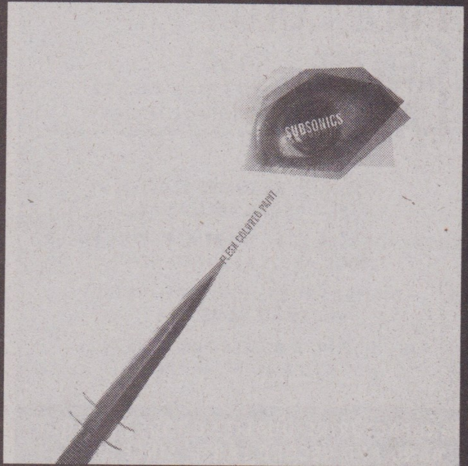


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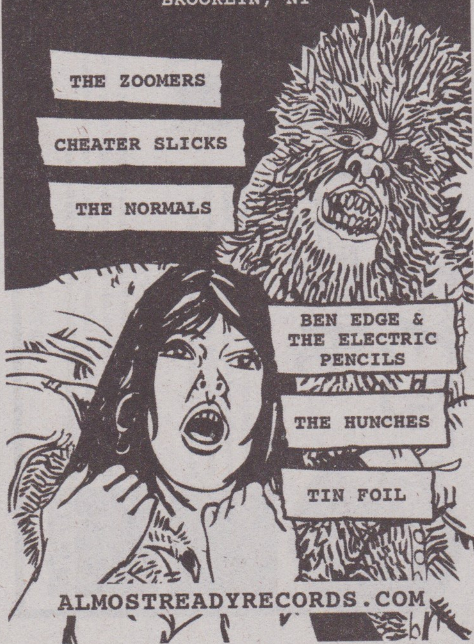


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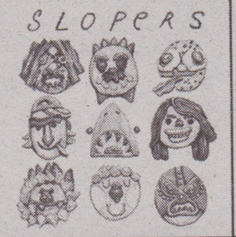

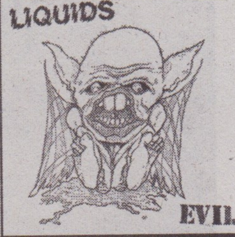


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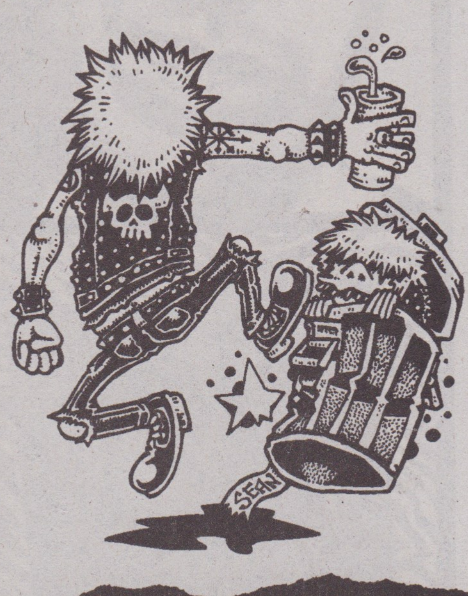

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# D O T S

DOTS are the sound of my people. In Italy's biggest flatland, between postcard medieval towns, intensive farming, and industrial complexes along the river Po, they emerge from the fog-shrouded bar parking lot like a Campari-induced vision of James Brown in a corny Euro-rap outfit blasting KBD punk out of a run down Fiat car. Back with a new, funkier sound after an eight-year hiatus, their genius had remained a secret to most of the worldwide punk community—until now. Their latest EP, Hangin' on a Black Hole, is out now on one-sided 12" through Depression House and Secret Suino records. This interview has been done with the band's singer Marco.

Interview and translation by Generic Giacomo. Photos by Giulia Mazza.

**MRR: The band started around 2006, am I right?**
Yeah, it was around that time. At first it was just an idea. Then we bought some instruments and we actually started playing.

**MRR: When the first show happened I was still sort of in the band, singing on a couple of songs. It was some kind of school-mandated arts thing where a few local bands were playing, right?**
It was a local festival with some high school bands. We immediately made the local paper because somebody cursed god on the mic, which, even though it isn't the 1940s anymore, in rural Italy is still a no-no. The best thing to come out of it was the headline, "Music from Suzzara: belching and blasphemy on stage," which of course helped us a lot. If there was such a thing as a punk rock business card, this kind of bullshit is exactly what it'd be.

**MRR: Let's put "rural Italy" in context. Suzzara is in the northern part of the country. Some Americans I've known said it reminded them of rural Indiana or the Midwest in general. It's a special place.**
It's the nowhere land between two cities, with one bar full of drunks, a bar's parking lot full of junkies, and, right on the river's edge, where the houses are cheaper because they tend to get flooded from time to time, a practice space. You can either go to the bar or to practice, but we tried to do both.

**MRR: For you and for the band, the key element was finding kindred spirits further down the river, in Veneto.**
This place is an enormous reclaimed swamp, where if you follow the river you might go through different dialects and different regions but the people stay the same. People from the swamp have a genuine, unfiltered quality. So there was this tiki bar an hour or so away from here called Ungawa where they started putting on Sunday afternoon shows that were absolutely wild. I've seen people ride their moped into the bar while the band was playing and do a couple donuts before heading out, singers getting naked and improvising lap dances...

**MRR: That was *thee* place. You'd get there on a Sunday and you could see everything from punk rock to rockabilly to hardcore to exotica...Anything that would get the crowd going. And it was this incredible tiki bar in the middle of a foggy, isolated little village.**
Ungawa would let anybody on stage as long as they were of service to the party. This, combined with the fact that everybody there really wanted to party, created the party. It is our belief that in the big cities

partying is dead. It may have been alive once, but not anymore. Out here we may not have much, but we still have the party.

**MRR: There's also the diversity of the crowd. In a small town there are no niches. You go to a show and everybody is there, from the preppy kid to the garage fan to the weird hippie or whatever.**
Yeah, it's like an avalanche. It doesn't differentiate.

**MRR: So the band finds a "scene," the Ungawa scene, that spans across the whole swampland here.**
Yeah, and we started playing a little bit, but most of all practicing and recording. We ended up putting out our first 7" EP on Ken Rock, and then the split with our brothers Virus on their label Depression House. At the time we were still a punk rock / hardcore band. We played everywhere we could. We even "toured" the States, even if it looked more like a vacation because we didn't really put too much effort into actually finding shows. When we got back from the States we lost some steam, everybody had to figure out their own shit, and we more or less went our separate ways. Most of us still hung out though, 'cause it's not like you make new friends every day in a place like this.

**MRR: That was a long hiatus though, 2008–2016. What went on in the meantime?**
Nothing much. We each had our own bands that never really took off. Then one day we got together in our basement / practice space, not to play, just to get drunk. We were listening to James Brown and we decided to try playing something funky, and what came out wasn't really funky, but we had a great time. So we did it again and again and ended up bringing the band back. It's not exactly the same lineup as it used to be, but the core is still there: my little brother Alessandro on drums, I'm on vocals, and Andrea switched from bass to guitar, then we got Paolo on bass—he's the only new guy. Since the lineup mostly stayed the same, we decided to keep the old band name too—which, to me, was the worst mistake we could make and thus the best thing to do.

**MRR: This new incarnation of DOTS is actually the most crazy, free, absurd and funny thing I've ever seen you do.**
Our idea was to completely fuck it up, because, well, we are misfits, and misfits are misanthropes and love everything that's wrong, warped, funny for all the wrong reasons; perverted. Our sense of humor and our aesthetic are completely rooted in bad taste.

We have no love for bands that look like they belong to an exhibition of '80s punk photos or are obsessed with sounding exactly like the cool band from the past. They look and sound like puppets who hate themselves. Our influences don't come from that, though we mostly listen to punk rock, hardcore, garage...

**MRR: ...And rap.**
Not really, you know? But I do appreciate it, and most importantly I think [rap fans] have much more fun than a bunch of 40-year-olds standing around at some festival watching a KBD band cashing in on the two songs they recorded when they were 16. And this is coming from somebody who worships the *Killed By Death* comps. But I don't think anybody should still try to sound like that.

Europeans pretending to be American, TV trash—not the *cool* kind of trash, I'm talking about the real shit—everyday stuff, humanoids you meet on the street during the day, replicants you meet in the bar at night, human interest stories you bump into at work, and especially the shitty music you hear on the radio: we take all that, add the music we actually like, put it in a blender and squeeze out a song that doesn't go over two minutes and that you can dance to. That's it.

**MRR: Now more than ever you have a hard time playing shows inside a certain niche. You don't seem interested in being part of a bigger scene.**
There's no reason to look for validation; it'll never come and it's OK, in a way. What we're looking for is just to make people dance. Ungawa closing was a hard blow for us, and we couldn't find that kind of atmosphere anywhere else. Not even abroad, at least from what I've seen around Europe. Our song "Brain Dance" is dedicated to those who become instantly paralyzed when they're at a show and they can only express appreciation through being completely still and applauding at the end. When I see that, I always hope they get hit by a flying mic stand.

**MRR: Is that why you started setting up shows in your basement?**
That was out of necessity. There are no venues around here. Since we know pretty much everybody who would go to a show anyway, why not just have them around to the house, so we can party properly and do whatever the fuck we want? We're really having fun as of now, so it's great; let's see what happens in the future. We also practice in there.

**MRR: You record everything yourself, right?**
To me, right now, DIY is absolutely fundamental. Of course I wouldn't mind if somebody paid to actually make the records or offered to distribute them, since I still have boxes and boxes of 'em under my bed. If it weren't for Andrea, though, all we could do would be to tape our practice sessions with a boombox or something. He's managed to pull songs out of what initially sounded like drunks fucking around. He's nailed down both bass and guitar parts, and also recorded everything we've ever done since 2007. We started with a cheap microphone hooked up to a shitty sound card, and the songs ended up sounding great thanks to his wizardry. And now he's running his own studio, Fat Bit, and I think he's the best recording engineer in Italy—granted, he's also the only one I've ever worked with.

**MRR: On the other hand, you are the lyrics wizard. You put a lot of effort into it, and I know this because every time you write a new song you call me and explain every line thoroughly. They're funny, but they have a poetic quality to them.**
You need to tell a story! Like Dolly Parton! I'm sick and tired of hearing songs against the cops, songs against the church...I agree with the sentiment, but you need to go a certain way about it, do something different. I'm fucking sick of this shit! Be yourself! When you're trying to talk about the filth that surrounds us, cynicism and irony are key.

**MRR: I remember one of your first songs back in '07, "The System Makes Me Yawn." It was an amazingly earnest account of the intersection between privilege and isolation. I don't need to fight the system because the system has no power here in nowhere land—it's just an annoyance that I sometimes have to avoid to keep doing what I wanna do.**
Yeah, it's just boring. You just wish some bands were more honest about their supposed involvement in radical politics. We don't need to make a big production of our integrity, we know where we stand—and we stand at the bar. To me, it's easy to make an angry sounding song about injustice; I find it more interesting to play some kind of smooth sexy ballad about really heavy stuff. The groove is the most important thing, and the guys are really laying into it with the new songs.

**MRR: When you and Andrea came to me, separately, and told me: "Don't tell the other guy I've told you, but we're putting DOTS back together...and now we're a funky band" I immediately knew this was gonna be brilliant, but I was also sure no one in Italy would've appreciated it. But the response has been great!**
Let's be clear: we didn't invent anything. But I think it's why and how we do it that makes it stand out, we've got our own style. It's a mess though. We've always had a problem promoting ourselves, we're more into practicing and partying.

**MRR: Do you think you're a punk band?**
Fuck yeah we are. We aim at being a destabilizing force in a situation that is far too stagnant. We try to always be ourselves. We're gonna keep doing what we do, we're already recording more songs and if we had money to put out another record we would, but first we need to get rid of the 300 copies we made with Depression House. We'd never had t-shirts, but we've just made a batch. They just say "buy the fucking record." Because you all need to get your priorities in check.

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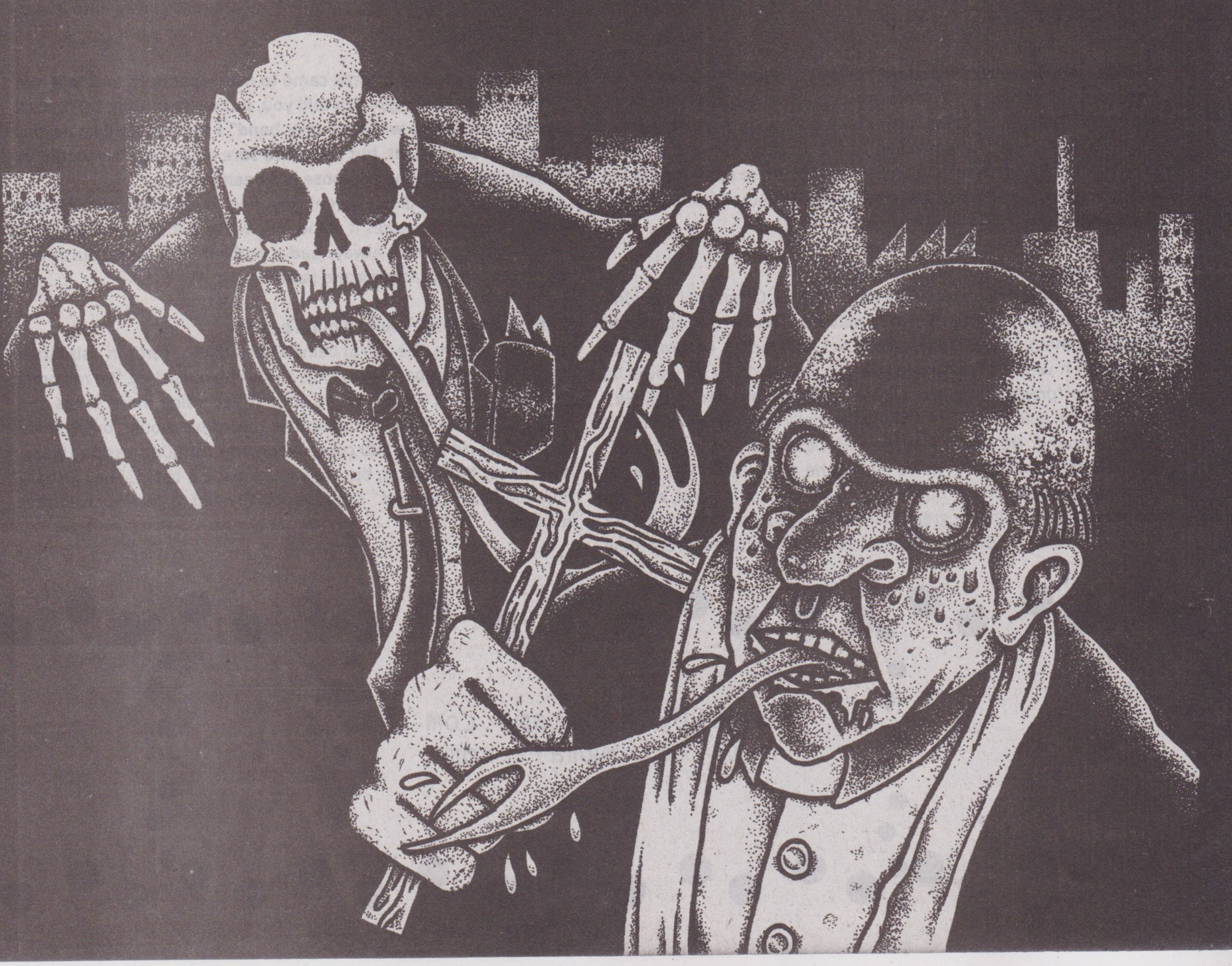
# KATASTROF

What do you get when you combine members of legendary Swedish acts Institution and Totalitär? Katastrof, the sound of lightning striking itself. Originally the studio-only project of Martin Lindqvist (all instruments) and Poffen (vocals), Katastrof has only one release, a 7" single released by Beach Impediment and Adult Crash Records from 2017. It has subsequently gained acclaim throughout D-beat aficionados and hardcore freaks as one of those elusive must-be-heard modern D-beat records. Martin and Poffen have subsequently formed a live band to shock and terrorize the punk masses throughout the world, and will be embarking on a brief US tour shortly. We spoke to them not long before they hit US soil.

Interview by Staffan Snitting.

Photos by Martin Anstey.



**MRR: Thank you for taking the time to answer this interview. Please give us a brief introduction of yourself before we move on to the matter at hand, Katastrof.**
I am Martin, I am 38 years old and I have been more or less involved in the hardcore punk scene here in Sweden since 1993. I have played in a dozen or so bands, booked shows, and written fanzines. My heart still burns for punk, hardcore, and DIY, but I can't prioritize these as much anymore, due to work and family obligations. I don't like to namedrop, so what bands I have been in previously is not important. Life is lived in the present, and at the moment it goes by the name of Katastrof.

**MRR: Fast music, abrupt changes. How come you started Katastrof instead of continuing on with previous projects?**
I had just quit a band and felt done with punk and hardcore. Drugs had once again taken control of me. I wanted to get my situation straight and make my family a priority, so I reached out for help and got into rehab. Once there, I started writing songs that I decided to record. The idea was to make it a solo project, but I am not much of a punk vocalist so I got in touch with Poffen. That's how Katastrof evolved into a band. Later on, Oscar and Viktor joined in to complete the catastrophe.

**MRR: Did music help you get back on your feet again?**
Yes, most definitely. Music gives me meaning and a purpose. For a short while, I don't have to think, or be subjected to the chaos inside of me. Being engaged in a project takes me away from my demons for a bit. Sort of like therapy.

**MRR: At your age, most have grown tired or disappointed in the scene. How would you describe your perspective on hardcore punk, your relation to both the music and the scene?**
My perspective these days is that punk and hardcore must not and will not swallow my whole existence. When I was younger, it was everything to me, often resulting in disappointments when something didn't go my way. I think it's dangerous to rely completely on just one thing for your wellbeing. Nowadays, my life is filled with both obligations and amusements, and a great deal of spirituality. I am grateful that I never left the scene completely, because that's where I grew up and found lifelong friends, as well as values and attitudes that I neither can nor want to give up on.

**MRR: Looking at the band from an outside perspective, Katastrof almost seems like a network of social support. You have Poffen on vocals, who you have played with in the past. Your friend Erik from Hårda Tider drew the cover art. Jakob at Adult Crash Records released it, just like records by your previous bands.**
Yes, in a sense that is the case. After working back and forth with people, you will eventually find the ones you function well with. Those who think alike and share your ideas about music, DIY and life itself. I trust these people. And furthermore, what they do, they do with massive fucking finesse.

**MRR: Were you able to let go of the vocal arrangements and completely hand it over to Poffen?**
Yes, Poffen was pretty much given free reign. I only contributed with the phrasing on some choruses. Poffen knows his stuff and does it well, so giving him control did not cause me any worries. After all, he used to sing for the best band in the world.

**MRR: You recorded the EP at Communichaos Media Clay Station, where an impressive amount of prominent Swedish hardcore punk from recent years has been put on tape. Share some thoughts about your relation to the studio and to its owner, Kenko.**
I can speak for ages about Kenko. A beautiful human with his heart in the right place. He invests a lot of seriousness and weight into everything he takes on. Nothing is done half-heartedly. I have played music together with him in the past, and the two of us quite frankly work in an unrivalled manner. On top of that, he is very skilled when it comes to recording technology, yet always hungry to learn more. He has meant a lot to the Swedish punk and hardcore scene. Recording at his house, where the studio is located, is an enjoyable experience, where you also get to meet his sweet family. Simply put, a very familiar atmosphere. Unmatched.

**MRR: I have often heard you being described as a real riff master. It almost seems like writing and playing works therapeutically for you.**
Definitely. I forget about time and space for a while when I am creative. I get a kick off the feeling of writing riffs that get me going. After a while, I think the riff sucks and I have to write new ones. In a way, I guess you can say that it works like a drug. There is always a better riff, just like there is always a better high. You can really dedicate yourself to creating music and being in a band, and for the most part it comes with positive emotions.

**MRR: A common theme for your music is its drive forward: a seemingly constant will to go forward that can be found in individual riffs, parts of songs and finally whole song structures. Does this happen spontaneously, or is the songwriting process more consciously steered?**
I usually just jam riffs until I have something that gives me a nice vibe, and then the rest will flow out of me. I like intense and fast riffs when it comes to punk. It has to carry energy and pressure in order to speak to me. I tend to decide beforehand if it's going to be a fast song or a 4 / 4 beat. Then all I have to do is riff. If I get stuck, I will usually find inspiration through listening to some other music. It is easy to fall into old writing habits, but if I do, there's usually a good friend around to let me know about it.

**MRR: The EP was recorded the spring of 2016. What's been going on since then in terms of new material? Do you have your sights on anything in particular?**
We just recently started rehearsing as a band with a full lineup. The plan is to play some gigs and then take a trip to the US. We will write new material and record it in 2018. Hopefully we will take steps forward now that we are a real band. The future is looking bright, and we are quite hungry.

**MRR: Speaking of that, what does the lineup look like?**
Poffen is on vocals, I play guitar, and Oscar, a childhood friend of mine, plays bass. We have Victor on drums, and he is doing a great job. He has played in a number of Uppsala Hardcore bands. Not just anyone can play a proper D-beat. It is an art form that few manage to play right. Many have been called for it, few have been chosen. But Victor knows what's up.

**MRR: Let's talk a little more about D-beat. As a drummer, where do you get the inspiration to really get the beat down the way it is supposed to be?**
The perfect D-beat is played by my long-time friend Jonas Silverå. It's got to have both swing and feeling. D-beat drummers come a plenty, but it's rare to hear someone get that perfect swing down. Speaking for myself, I have listened a lot to Jonas's, Jallo's and Kenko's respective D-beats. And early Discharge, obviously.

**MRR: You've said that you learned to play D-beat on both drums and guitar by attending the institute of Janne Jutila, also known as Studio D-Takt, in Uppsala. Janne later on recorded Herätys in the studio. Tell us about the experience of being taught by Jutila.**
That's correct. Janne taught me the foundations and then I developed things from there. Janne has very firm opinions regarding D-beat. Both in terms of how it is played on drums, and how it's done on guitar and bass. The guitar and bass needs to follow the drums. D-beat is played on guitar and bass as well, and it's all in the wrist. It took me a long time to learn correctly, but in the end it clicked and the feeling was priceless. I got to know Janne 15 years ago. We have played together and he recorded Herätys. I am thankful for everything he has taught me, even though our opinions don't always match. He is a rigid D-beat PhD. But I also have to praise Jallo for everything he has taught me regarding D-beat.

**MRR: Going back to playing live, Damaged City Fest has announced that you're on their 2018 bill. Congratulations on being booked to a great fest. Will you do any other shows around the fest weekend?**
There will be a number of additional dates. We will be touring for a week, and we're extremely stoked. It will be great to play live. There will also be a few Swedish shows before we fly to the US. It's all very exciting.

**MRR: Uppsala is a city that stands out for both its hardcore punk (Uppsala Hardcore, UAHC) bands and its extreme metal (under the banner Metal Of Death Uppsala). What is it that creates these strong and colourful profiles, even maniacs in some cases, as well as bands with impressively high quality?**
I'd like to say that Uppsala Hardcore's never been sensitive to trends. My experience is that you haven't had to think any certain way to be a part of the scene. If your heart is in the right place you're welcome. Diversity is strength. There has always been strong enthusiasts and good access to rehearsal and recording studios, which makes thing easier. What we have been missing is a steady gig venue, but people make it work by doing shows in garages and rehearsal studios.

**MRR: Any closing words?**
Follow your heart. Dare to stick out for yourself. You are never too old for punk and hardcore.

katta.bandcamp.com

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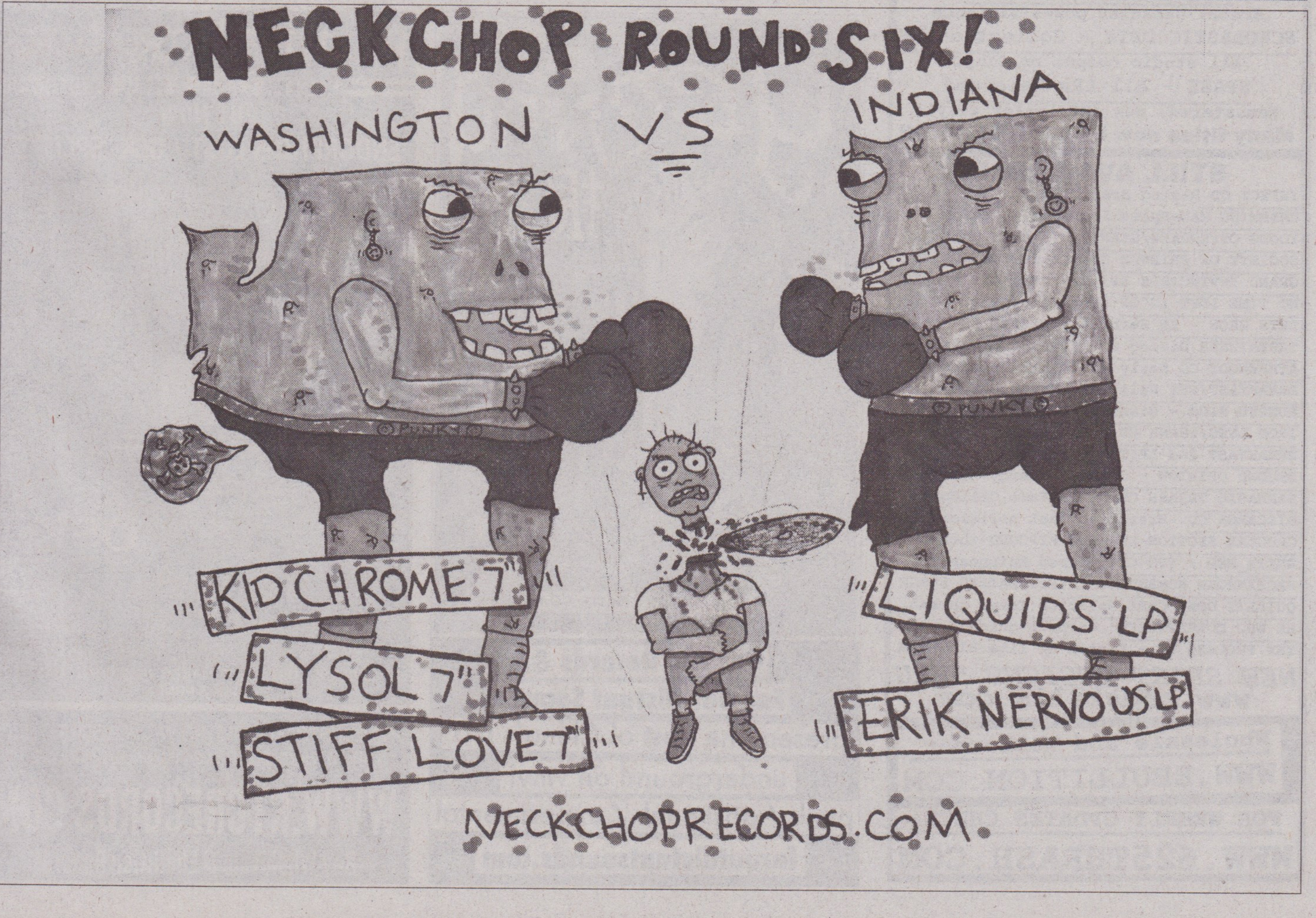

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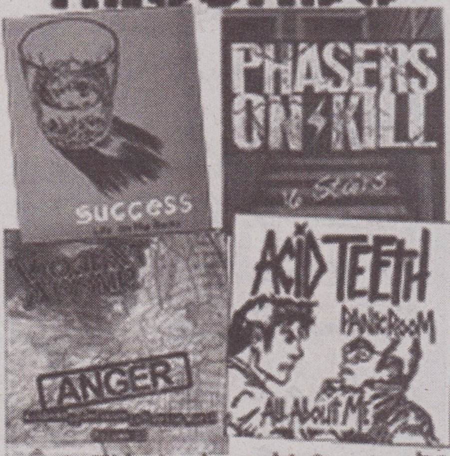


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# PROTOCOL

Introduction and interview by Joan DeToro.

Photos provided by the band.

*It would be a grave disservice to the world if I did not give Protocol the chance to speak their minds in* Maximum Rocknroll. *The best kept secret from Tallahassee, Florida, Protocol has been crushing hardcore tropes with their wall of noise sound. But their sound isn't their only appeal—Protocol also actively criticizes racism in a very personal and blunt, yet thoughtful, way.*

*I was a direct witness to the first year of their existence. At the time they began, there were few active local DIY hardcore bands—Night Witch, Gutbox, Myakka, Sick Kids, and Protocol. So it was natural that my band Myakka would play frequently with them, sharing the stage with them at our first show. Every time I saw them play, I became awestruck by every aspect of their performance—Ahmad Ferguson's powerful presence on the mic, guitarist Geoff Perkins's wall-of-death guitar mangling, and rhythm section JC Gray and Ronnie Francisco's dynamic pulse, always in perfect lockstep with each other. It is no wonder that, with merely a demo to their name, Protocol have been making waves on the Southern hardcore circuit. Maybe one day you too will be devastated by their live presence.*

**MRR: You all have been friends for a long time. Who are you, and how did you meet each other?**

Ahmad Ferguson: I met Geoff the very first day I moved to Tallahassee, and Ronnie and JC pretty soon after. In 2011 there was a venue called the Farside where shows, events, and meetings were held. It was very communal and volunteer-oriented and I was really eager to get involved, and through my involvement with the Farside I was able to meet them and many others that I am very lucky to call my friends.

Geoff Perkins: I met Ahmad exactly as his account tells. I confirmed that we were kindred spirits when I saw him dancing in the center of a university-sanctioned "beginning-of-the-semester" party by our dorms in a Terror crewneck sweater. I knew friendship was our destiny. I met Ronnie the year prior, 2010. I had just moved to town for school and hardly knew anyone, but I saw his old band play at the Farside and he had a very crucial In My Eyes shirt on. He looked way too cool for me. I didn't want to go bother him and say "Nice set!" I don't remember how I met JC, but I'm sure it was because of Ronnie and company, who were all kind enough to welcome me into their town and scene and take me ghost hunting.

JC Gray: Ronnie and I grew up here in Tallahassee and both got into music at a pretty young age. This town being as small as it is, we were both always orbiting around each other with all our mutual friends in the scene. I was (and am) kinda selectively shy about certain social things, so it took a while to really become outgoing and make that friend thing happen with a lot of the people I always saw at local shows. However, once I moved

into Ghazi House—an old house venue here—in 2013, I started really bridging that gap, and I think it was around this time when Ronnie and I really started to get to know one another. Same goes for Ahmad and Geoff, who I got to know more as they often came around to hang out after shows and what not. If it weren't for the multivariable carousel that was Ghazi hangs, I probably wouldn't have had as close a relationship with everyone in Protocol as I do now.
Ronnie Francisco: I was there. This is all true. I met everyone in different ways but collectively got closer by playing music.

**MRR: When did you all start playing music together? What is your pre-Protocol musical history?**
Ronnie: I've played in various bands in Tally for many years. Actually, before Protocol, Geoff, Ahmad, and I were in another hardcore band called Trace.
Ahmad: Before Protocol, the only other band I had been in was Trace, which Ronnie was gracious enough to lend his talents to. Geoff, Ronnie, and JC have been in about 5,000 bands throughout my entire span of being here and beyond, though!
Geoff: I played my first show ever with JC in an Ergs! cover band for Halloween 2011 when I was 19. I played my second show the day after with Ronnie, JC, *and* Ahmad in a New Found Glory cover band. I think Ahmad was 18 and dressed up as Ke$ha or something. Me and Ronnie have been playing together in many assorted projects since then, hardcore or otherwise. We live together and are currently playing in both Protocol and Big Heet *[who, at the time of publication, has just broken up]* with each other. He's my favorite drummer and I'll be lucky to ever find someone like him again. This is my first band with Ahmad and JC, and it's been awesome. I was never in the band Trace and there is a conspiracy about me being in that band, do not believe the fucking lies.
Ahmad: Geoff's answer is the most comprehensive and true... besides the part where he's not in Trace. *[laughter]*
Ronnie: You're on the cover of the Trace tape—you're in the band! *[laughter]*
JC: In the past, I have only been a part of very low-key projects that have played only a handful of shows and then my first band ever, Moshing X, featuring members of Night Witch, Ex-Breathers, and Depths of Reality.

**MRR: I need to address this at some point—Protocol is a very serious band, but so far all of your interactions we've had in this interview (and elsewhere) are littered with in-jokes. Care to comment?**
JC: Did someone just turn up the heat in here...
Ahmad: In an attempt to answer this seriously: I think there's value in not taking oneself seriously! There are definitely things that are important to all of us and messages and feelings that we're trying to communicate within the context of the band, but that is only one facet of the multi dimensional lives that all of us strive to lead. Also, I've always believed that if you take yourself too seriously, no one will take you seriously.
Geoff: Speaking personally and in agreement with Ahmad, this music is only one part of my life. One project, one piece of art. I have many interests, ideas, and emotions I hope to convey as a person or artist as I live. The content of this band is absolutely serious, or at least genuine, but I think a big part of my enjoyment of this is the fun that I can find in it. Life is oppressive and unenjoyable; I personally hope to relish in the good times as much as I can because they are fleeting. I play this music to explore serious parts of myself that are not otherwise explored, but this would be for nothing if I couldn't get something positive or encouraging from it. Friendship and fun are an integral part of this band for me, and perhaps music in general. I may have over philosophized this a bit, but it's my truth.

**MRR: After Trace broke up, how did all of you end up playing together in Protocol?**
Geoff: Ahmad and I had been talking about doing a band for a long time. Trace and another band that me and Ronnie were in broke up around the same time, leaving us with some time to focus on this new thing finally. I think JC was living with Ahmad and had mentioned wanting to play bass in a band so we all met up and started practicing. I had some songs I had been working on for a long time that were a natural fit. I don't think there is a cool story here or anything, but maybe someone might have more to chime in with.
Ahmad: That sounds about right; the "origin story" is pretty boring! We were just friends who wanted to start a hardcore band in town.

**MRR: I overheard someone describe your band's sound as a cross between Negative Approach and Confuse. Do you feel as though that's accurate? What are your musical inspirations for Protocol?**
Ahmad: That is a seriously flattering comparison! I'm not certain how well it translates in reality, but those are definitely bands I have in mind when I think of how I'd love for us to sound. Two bands I got into very early on who I continue

to love are Negative Approach and Youth of Today, so those bands definitely guide me, and I know Geoff and I take cues from the Burning Spirits bands as well.

Geoff: Negative Approach and Confuse is definitely a description that I can dig. Although, as much as we talk about and cover Negative Approach I don't really think we actually sound like them much. But they're one of my favorite bands. I think a chopped and screwed mix of Youth of Today, Gauze, and Confuse is probably a little more apt, and these three are definitely key influences for me. I think we have a bit of a noise rock thing that goes on too, maybe some No Trend or Brainbombs mid-paced stupidity. We have a little more of an overdramatic, modern approach to our songwriting than these bands, however, and I definitely am always influenced / listening to a lot of the new blood that comes out, not just the staples. The always excellent Barcelona hardcore scene is a great influence on me currently.

**MRR: Did you have any particular goals in mind that you wanted to accomplish when you formed Protocol? Did you already have a direction that you wanted to move towards?**

Ahmad: For me, definitely not. I think the only real goal I had was to be a part of something I really liked and something that I could be proud of. One secondary goal, I think, was to offer a change of pace and talk about things from the perspective of being a person of color and doing so in a way that is challenging and (loosely) political, but still very much rooted in personal experience. We're all mutts in some way, and I feel like being black and brown is something we identify strongly with and that we're very proud of, but I didn't want for that to be all we were—I wanted us to be, above anything else, a good band.

Geoff: Going to answer this one personally, again. My first and foremost goal with any band is to express myself in a way that I can't seem to through any other medium. I am not a good speaker or writer and I don't like to do those things. Music is useful for me because I can convey something within myself by other means. Other goals I may have had were focused more on a local level. I wanted to make music that was confrontational and political in an organic, sincere way. The scene we come from is often times performative and postured. I hope that this band exists in contrast to that.

**MRR: I think you've succeeded in your goals to be both confrontational and political. I doubt that few people who watch Protocol, listen to the music, or read the lyrics would find you to be anything but political. What are the goals that you have when talking about politics?**

Ahmad: I appreciate those kind words! I'm not sure how "successful" we are, but it's been really fulfilling (and surprising) to see the way people sometimes connect with what we're doing. As far as goals go, the only real goal I have is self-expression. Folks have a tendency to divorce the personal and the political into separate realms, and while I think that is valid, in my opinion it is more common for the lines to blur, and for the personal to be political. Perhaps being a member of a marginalized group means one's personal existence is inherently political...who knows! All I ultimately strive to do is communicate thoughts and feelings, and my experiences inform that.

**MRR: Who are some people that you looked up to in regards to their politics? What are the lessons that you learned from those people? How do you hope to follow in their footsteps?**

Ahmad: I don't know that I really find myself looking up to someone's politics all that often, but there are certainly people who have influenced my thinking greatly! bell hooks, Angela Davis, Toni Morrison, and Ta-Nehisi Coates come to mind. I've learned a ton from those folks, but I would boil the lessons down to embracing one's identity in totality, learning to navigate the intersections that are difficult, and learning to accepting the parts that afford some sort of privilege as well as the responsibility that comes with that. As far as following in their footsteps, I'm still figuring that part out!

Geoff: As corny as it is, I have learned the most from my friends, family and community. I read the news and I consult the few people that I trust. I don't follow any pundits or worship any philosophers because they each have their hang ups. I take it in piecemeal. I'm not smart and I'm not a good reader, my only pursuit is that of empathy. Empathy helps me to listen when I should and to live what I know. I've learned a lot from Ahmad and I love to listen to him speak, during our performances or otherwise. I learned about violence and love from my mother who is an immigrant and Vietnam War refugee.

JC: In regard to their politics, I look up to my older sister, who has been involved in social justice campaigns for Latinx people for quite some time. She was the first person I knew who broke the toxic liberal mold of voting Democratic but living complicity.

Without her pushing me all throughout my teens to elevate my thinking, even though I would sometimes be pushing back, it's possible I'd still be dragging my knuckles on concepts of white and male privilege. In many ways, her politics, lessons, and inspiration to me could be ascribed to others in the Tallahassee DIY community, but I have to give it up to her, because *familia*. I also look up to my mother, who is an immigrant to the US from Cuba. She's not always someone I look up to in regard to politics, but her experiences as a refugee have informed so much of my identity that I try to follow in her footsteps insofar as being strong when it is so easy to be weak.

**MRR: All of you in some way mentioned identity in your answers. How does your identity impact your presence and participation in the punk scene?**

Ahmad: Punk, as subversive as it strives to be, is still an overwhelmingly white space and as such, anyone who exists outside of that is destined to feel "othered" at some points in their participation. One of my first memories of going to shows is someone pointing to me and saying "we need more of *those* people coming to shows," so my status as a person of color in punk and the perceived abnormality of that has always been something I'm aware of. I don't know how to word the way my identity impacts my participation without just saying... sometimes it's weird! As hardcore has evolved and people's politics have shifted with them, sometimes people put you on a pedestal for doing normal things; sometimes people are really eager to show that they are "down" and they "get it." I'm not a platform built for someone to prove how woke they are, and I certainly don't want to have a conversation about how awful all of the other white people are, and yet, those things have happened many many times. Identity is an important part of who I am, but sometimes there's an eagerness to see marginalized people solely as marginalized, and not as people. Though people are operating with good intentions a lot of the time, sometimes it's a bit dehumanizing. Believe it or not, above all I am here because I love punk and hardcore music.

Ronnie: Ahmad puts in perfectly. There's some level of expectation I feel like for punk music or a music scene, like how to act or how you are perceived. I try and be as authentic and true to myself as possible. In other places I have played, people see me and are surprised someone "like me" can play or be into punk. Since these kinds of interactions, it's motivated me to play more and take up the opportunity to play with others. I do love playing music and it's challenging to fit it into my schedule sometimes. But I like participating when I can, and hopefully someone sees that there are "other" types of people can play music and be involved in a scene.

Geoff: I'm not sure how my identity impacts my presence or participation. I guess I would say it doesn't. My identity is intersectional and I am a minority in maybe multiple ways, but I have never felt hindered from doing what I do within this music scene. I have been playing in bands for many years now and booking shows for a couple and haven't felt any recognizable blowback related to my ethnicity, gender or sexuality. I think that my identity may affect the way I am perceived and the way people interact with me but it stops there. My only personal obstacle is trying to feel comfortable within my own skin when I have to speak or perform. Especially in front of people I do not align with or don't know. But on the flip side, I would say that playing punk music has only strengthened me and given me agency. As much as punk music and gigs appeal to my outsider sentiments, it is one of the few things that lets me be what I want to.

**MRR: Ahmad and Ronnie, since both of you have noted moments of tokenization by other punks. Did either of you have moments when you considered walking away from punk or from performing?**

Ronnie: I wouldn't walk away from it since playing music is a pretty big part of my life.

Ahmad: Nah, I've never considered walking away—being involved in punk has fundamentally changed my life, and whatever annoyances I run into within punk are sure to be mirrored, if not amplified, in other spaces.

**MRR: Most marginalized groups find representation to be incredibly important; that the presence of marginalized people in a community can help increase the presence of those people in that community. Did you have any heroes that encouraged you to be more involved in punk?**

Ronnie: I don't have any heroes necessarily in punk. But I do fully support marginalized groups being represented and prevalent in the punk community. I look up to that most of all and to me I like seeing diversity in a scene

Ahmad: In general, I'm not one to really lionize or idealize people so this question is tough! I think the thing that inspires me the most isn't necessarily a group of individuals, but rather the idea of being a part of a creative collective as a whole. In spite of the world existing to spite people of color, people of color built the world. In spite of every odd stacked against them, people of color are and always have been the main creators, perpetrators, and arbiters of culture. The idea that a group of people can continue to exist, create, and even thrive under the worst of circumstances is really inspiring to me and something I think about a lot.

Geoff: Are we just talking race? I'm inspired by people who thrive in adversity, but that comes in many forms. There are a lot of multiracial people like me, but it's a difficult intersection to discuss and identify with, honestly. This is a big reason why I like being in Protocol and why a few of us rally around being "mutts." There's not a lot of Asian people in punk, and even less that have moved me as an artist. When I moved to Tallahassee as a young person, there was actually a really diverse group of kids. Many people of color and more Asian people in a US punk scene than I have ever seen to this day. One of them was Ronnie! Seeing them at my first house show going off and taking up space was pretty inspiring, and I felt welcomed instantly. It's not really this way anymore, but it kept me coming back. As far as "heroes," the only person that really comes to mind with a similar background is Sothira from Crucifix. Even then, we are pretty different because I'm American born and I'm multiracial. Regardless, his lyrics, Cambodian background, and refugee status resonate with me and my family story.

**MRR: It's been a bit since you've put out your demo. What have you been working on since then? What should we expect from you in the future?**

Ahmad: We're concentrating on writing new songs at the moment. We don't have any concrete plans as far as how or when we will release them, but we're aiming to get another 3/4 song release out by late spring / early summer. In the meantime, hopefully we'll be playing out of town here and there when the opportunity arises!

*protocolbrownbois.bandcamp.com*

*There is nothing—absolutely no feeling in the world—that compares to hearing a brilliant punk song for the first time. A song that simultaneously resembles nothing you've ever heard, yet instantly feels familiar. I count myself lucky that no matter how old I get, I never seem to run out of these songs, these experiences. Friends tip me off to both contemporary bands and new-to-me '70s and '80s obscurities. Compilations unearth the rarest tracks and present them to me in tidy packages. And I'm always scouring the internet for more, more, more.*

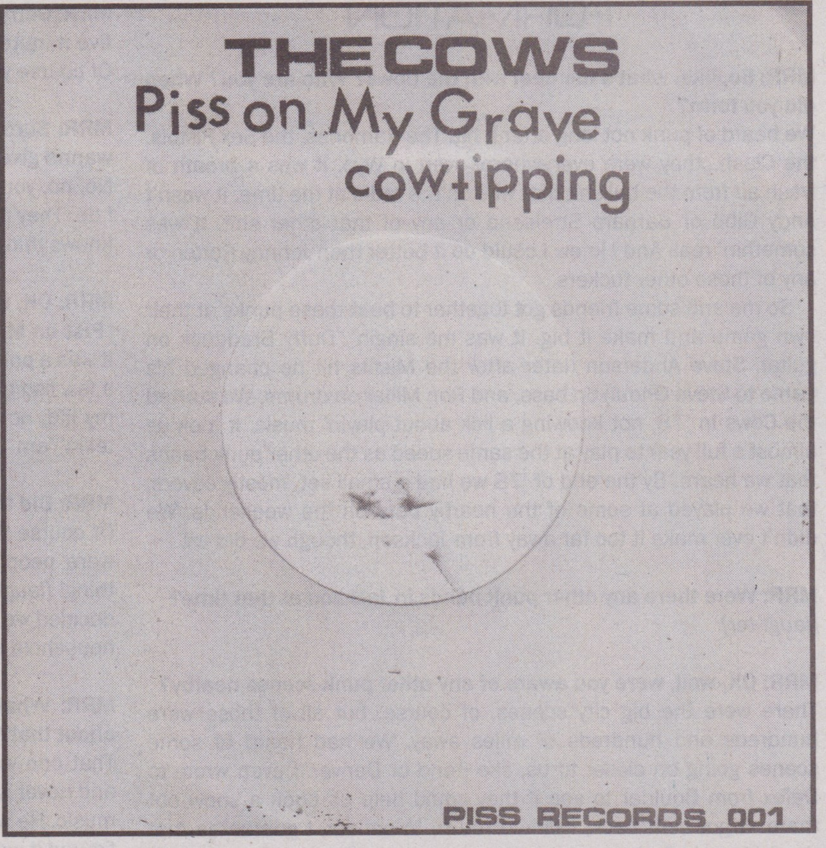
*The story of the Cows is not any of these stories.*

*I found a copy of the Cows' only record, the "Piss on My Grave / Cowtipping" single, in 2012 at a record swap in Berkeley. I was flipping through stacks of the usual record fair tripe when something about this plain white sleeve with black type caught my eye. It was clearly not the Amphetamine Reptile Cows; the copyright date was 1980. It was marked "PISS RECORDS #001." Even then, I doubted there had ever been a PISS #002.*

*The guy selling had no idea what it was. He was asking $6. I talked him down to $4. Whatever the Cows were, they were mine now.*

*Little did I know this was only the beginning of my obsession. From the moment the needle hit vinyl on "Piss on My Grave," I was in total disbelief. "I'M GONNA GONNA GONNA GONNA GONNA PISS ON MY GRAVE!" yelped the singer, sounding as though he were unsure of his own words. The band fumbled behind him, struggling to keep it together. It was a miracle they all managed to end at the same time. I played it again. And then again. "Cowtipping," the B-side, wasn't bad, but it couldn't hold a candle to "Piss on My Grave." Was he threatening to piss on his own grave?! He clearly was. But why? And who was he? The only information provided was an address on the reverse of the sleeve in Jackson, Wyoming.*

*The internet provided no help. Discogs had no listing for this Cows; Googling returned zero results. And my friends seemed to be convinced I was making up the whole record. But I could always prove them wrong by whipping it out and staring in their eyes as they too became enthralled to the discordant sounds of "Piss on My Grave."*




*The writer's copy of the Cow's 1980 single. We do not have any photos or info available about the Cows. Do you have any? Send your Cows stories and photographs to: mrr@maximumrocknroll.com*

*After a while, I stopped trying to find out about the Cows. Every path had been a dead end; it didn't seem worth continuing to pour my time into this impossibly dumb record. But these mysterious Cows never completely left my mind. Some part of me just couldn't leave behind the tantalizing clue of that Jackson address. So when, in October, I found myself on a cross-country road trip that happened to pass through Wyoming, I knew I would always regret it if I didn't at least try to find, if not a Cow himself, then someone who could tell me something—anything—about the Cows. I bid my traveling companion adieu and trekked off to that Montgomery Street address.*

*What I found was astounding. The man who answered the door, who insists that I call him Gerry Reckless, wasn't just the only other person I'd met who had heard of the Cows. He wasn't even just a Cow. He was, simply put, the Cow. And he told me a story that I never could have imagined in my wildest dreams.*

*Introduction and interview by Matt Badenhop.*

## FORMATION

**MRR: So, like, what's the deal with the Cows? Who are you? When did you form?**

We heard of punk not long after it hit. The Ramones, the Sex Pistols, the Clash...they were everywhere, even in Wyo. It was a breath of fresh air from the bullshit that was on the radio at the time. It wasn't Andy Gibb or Barbara Streisand or any of that other shit. It was somethin' real. And I knew I could do it better than Johnny Rotten or any of those other fuckers.

So me and some friends got together to beat these punks at their own game and make it big. It was me singin', Duffy Braddock on guitar, Steve Anderson (later after the Misfits hit he changed his name to Steve Ghoul) on bass, and Ron Miller on drums. We started the Cows in '78, not knowing a lick about playin' music. It took us almost a full year to play at the same speed as the other punk bands that we heard. By the end of '78 we had a small set, mostly covers, that we played at some of the nearby bars on the weekends. We didn't ever make it too far away from Jackson, though we did try.

**MRR: Were there any other punk bands in Jackson at that time?**

*[laughter]*

**MRR: OK, well, were you aware of any other punk scenes nearby?**

There were the big city scenes, of course, but all of those were hundreds and hundreds of miles away. We had heard of some scenes going on closer to us, like Reno or Denver. I even wrote to Defex from Boulder to see if they could help us book a show out there. It got sent back, marked return to sender. I guarantee that the fuckers in Defex wrote that on their themselves. I was so angry with them that I never bothered writin' another band for help again. Though after the Cows broke up, I wrote the Wrecks to see if one of them would want to go on a date. Never heard back from them...

**MRR: So many punk bands at the time have tough or crass names. Why did you name your band the Cows?**

*[laughter]* Look around you!

## "PISS ON MY GRAVE"

**MRR: So what's the deal with the song "Piss on My Grave"? You're gonna piss on your own grave?**

Yeah. I knew at a young age that I'm never gonna die. I've always known that I would just keep on goin' for forever—no cancer, nor lightnin', nor old age would strike me down. However, if I do die at the hands of another person, say by gettin' killt by a truck, you can bet your ass that I'm going to be furious. I won't rest easy in my grave—I'm gonna come back. And the first thing I'm gonna do is find my tombstone, unzip my pants, and piss all over it. I'll scream "*Fuck you for dyin' you dumb sonovabitch*!" That'll show me for being wrong.

**MRR: Do you have the same plans for vengeance against whatever person who killed you?**

Not unless they did it maliciously. If they don't got evil in their heart, if they killt me on accident, then that's not deservin' of punishment. If you look inside of me and see the real me, you'll see that I'm a good person. No matter what anybody else tries to tell you. Did you talk to them too?

**MRR: Who?**

You know, the guys. Duffy, Steve. Ron, that fucker.

**MRR: Gerry, I'd never heard of these guys until you said their names five minutes ago. I'd never even heard of you.**

Of course you'd heard of me. I'm the Cows!

**MRR: Sure, OK. Well, no, I haven't talked to any of them. Do you wanna give me their phone numbers or something?**

No, no, you don't need to do that. They don't remember as good as I do. They'd say it all wrong. I can answer for them. I'm the one who knows things.

**MRR: OK, well, what did the rest of the band think of your lyrics for "Piss on My Grave"?**

It was a point of contention with the rest of the band for a bit. We had a few fistfights over the lyrics, but I stuck by my words. They're about my life, not theirs. I even lost a tooth in one of 'em brawls. I kept tellin' 'em "Just wait 'til we play it live! Everybody will love it!"

**MRR: Did they?**

Of course they did! By the second or third time we played it, there were people singing along, as if they were gonna do the same thing! *[laughter]* It was easily our most popular song. That's why we decided we needed to record it. We knew it would make us big, make household names of us.

**MRR: What about the song "Cowtipping"? What can you tell us about that?**

That one was entirely Duffy. He grew up on the outskirts of town, and never was interested in much beyond the rural life, drinkin', and music. He wanted to have a song that was about local pride, and we figured it would be a good addition to the single as well. It'd make us stick out from the punk bands from the bigger cities.

## RECORDING

**MRR: So speaking of the single, how did that end up happening?**

We were making good money at gigs, about $75 for your typical weekend show. The bars would give us a cut from the door as long as we brought in a thirsty crowd, which we always did. So we saved up that money, worked some side jobs, and booked some time at KMTN in Jackson.

**MRR: What did the recording engineer say when four punks walked in the door?**

*[laughter]* They didn't want to record us at first! They looked at us as if we were a bunch of demons, especially Steve Ghoul with his bullshit makeup. But they took us in after we showed them that we could pay. We later found out those fuckers usually don't charge for recordin'—they're a fuckin' college radio station. Discrimination against punks was everywhere back then.

**MRR: How many songs did you end up recording?**

We did about four or five tracks, all originals. I couldn't tell you what other songs we recorded—we lost the tapes years ago.

## PISS RECORDS AND BREAK-UP

**MRR: What happened to the masters?**

That fucker Ron kept them after we broke up, insisting that it was his money that paid for the records. Bullshit—we all chipped in. Not long after we broke up, he hit a rough patch. His truck's carburetor was failin' on him and he was spendin' all of his paycheck on booze.

So he ended up sellin' the tape to another local band, some bullshit new wave act called Hot Wire, for the money he needed to fix up his truck. Hot Wire never even recorded with it. For all I know the tapes are in a dump somewhere. They threw away gold—those songs coulda made us rich.

**MRR: That's a damn shame. So the records are the only way to hear these songs then. Speaking of, how did Piss Records come about? How many copies of the record did you make?**
Well Piss Records came out of necessity. We sent the records to the plant without any labels or anythin' for them—we wanted to use them to get signed to a bigger label, so we only made about 100 or so of them. We ordered some blank sleeves and hand-stamped them ourselves so the record labels could know who they were dealing with. We all wanted to get big, so we sent them to the big labels—Sire, CBS, Virgin, you name it. If they put out a big punk band, we wanted in on their label. But we never heard back from any of them. We were left with most of our records after that, just sittin' around in my house. None of us wanted to keep 'em.

**MRR: Did you send them to any smaller labels?**
Naw. We wanted to use them to get rich enough to retire at an early age. But after not hearing from any of the labels, we decided we needed to get our investment back, so we added Piss Records to the bottom of the record sleeve. We sold a couple at shows, but most of the people singin' along didn't wanna buy it. I sent some off as a trade to some punks—I think Tim Kerr probably has one somewhere, I bet Ian Mackaye does too. I know I sent one to the Wrecks with my letter, d'ya think they threw it out?

**MRR: Hopefully not. Did you try advertising in any zines that the record was available?**
At that point, the rest of the band (mostly Ron) were furious. They had high expectations for the record—they wanted to be swimmin' in money by the end of 1980. When we didn't get any word from the record labels, they all asked for their money back. Said it was a big waste of time to even be in the Cows at that point. I told 'em we should try to sell the records outta town but they didn't listen. They kept insisting the Cows (really just me) owed them. But we all chipped in together to pay for it! It don't make much sense.

**MRR: And that's when you ended up breaking up? When was that?**
Christ, must have been '81. Didn't take too long after the record for those assholes to get fed up. We ended up having a big fight at a bar that got outta hand. We were sittin' at the bar when Ron demanded that I pay for his tab. Duffy and Steve joined in. I told 'em to fuck off, I didn't even have that money to begin with. We spent it all on the records! I can't make money appear outta nowhere. Well, it blew up real quick. Ron threw the first swing, but he was so drunk that he missed. The bartender tried to clear things up, but Duffy clocked him hard enough that he was out for the night. It was a mess. I lost a tooth that night.

**MRR: And that was it?**
Yeah. We were supposed to have practice the next day, but Ron called up and said he still wanted the money. Greedy sonovabitch...I told him we didn't have any money left over, so he quit. I called up Duffy and Steve and told them. They weren't as sore about it, but with Ron gone, we didn't know what to do. A good drummer is hard to find, especially in Wyo. We tried looking around for someone that could fit in, but nobody else had Ron's energy and drive. Plus, all the drummers we met wanted to play new wave—fuck that.

## AFTERMATH

**MRR: I can't believe you're still living in the same house after all these years.**
Well, it was my mama's house. I knew that no matter what happened, I could always come home to my mama. I went away for a while, then I ended up back here, oh, '98 or so. Was supposed to be '04, but I got good behavior, got to leave early. Now my mama's gone, so it's just me here, but it'll always be my mama's house.

**MRR: You went away to...**
Spent some time in the state pen, yes, yes I did. I ain't proud of it, but there was nothin' I could do. They were saying it was me who robbed the liquor store over on Broadway. Wasn't me, of course, but those fuckin' pigs wouldn't hear it. They don't wanna hear shit from the punks. Especially then.

**MRR: This was at the end of the Cows?**
No, no, after that. This was '89. Listen, things have really changed in this place. Used to be a nothing town full of shit-for-brains rednecks. Now it's a nothing town full of shit-for-brains tourists. *[laughter]* But one thing never changes here, and that's the fuckin' pigs got it out for the punks. They still hassle me.

**MRR: You still consider yourself a punk?**
Course I do! I'm a punk 'til I die. Only punk this town's ever seen. And don't let that fucker Ron tell you any different. He was never a punk. Never. Can you put that in your magazine? Ron Miller was never a goddamn punk. He told me once he liked that fuckin' song, what's it, about the personal ads? "*If you like piña coladaaaaas!*" Bullshit. Never a punk. Put that in there. Write that down.

I was in it for the long haul, always have been. Did a couple of other projects after that, maybe you've heard of them? Pain Garden? The Church of the Eclipse? Well, nothin' was ever as good as the Cows, anyway. I said my piece with the Cows. Let everybody know I'm serious about pissing on my grave.

**MRR: I take it you and Ron aren't close any longer.**
I don't know about that. I mow his lawn in the summer. I charge a fair price. I just don't like him tryin' to tell people about the Cows. He don't remember. He tells it all wrong.

**MRR: Are a lot of people asking about the Cows these days?**
Jackson legend, baby. Mythical. People was there. People remember yet. You're the first out of towner to come around, but I knew it was gonna happen. I just knew it. Now this Cows thing can really take off. You think somebody'd wanna rerelease this thing? I see these vinyl records online. They could go for a lot of money, right? Put that in there. If somebody wants to give me a boatload of money for some Cows records, I'm in. Let's do it.

***There are no recordings available online of "Piss on My Grave" or "Cowtipping." Wanna release a long-lost punk classic and let the whole world hear the Cows? Get in touch and we will connect you with Gerry Reckless.***

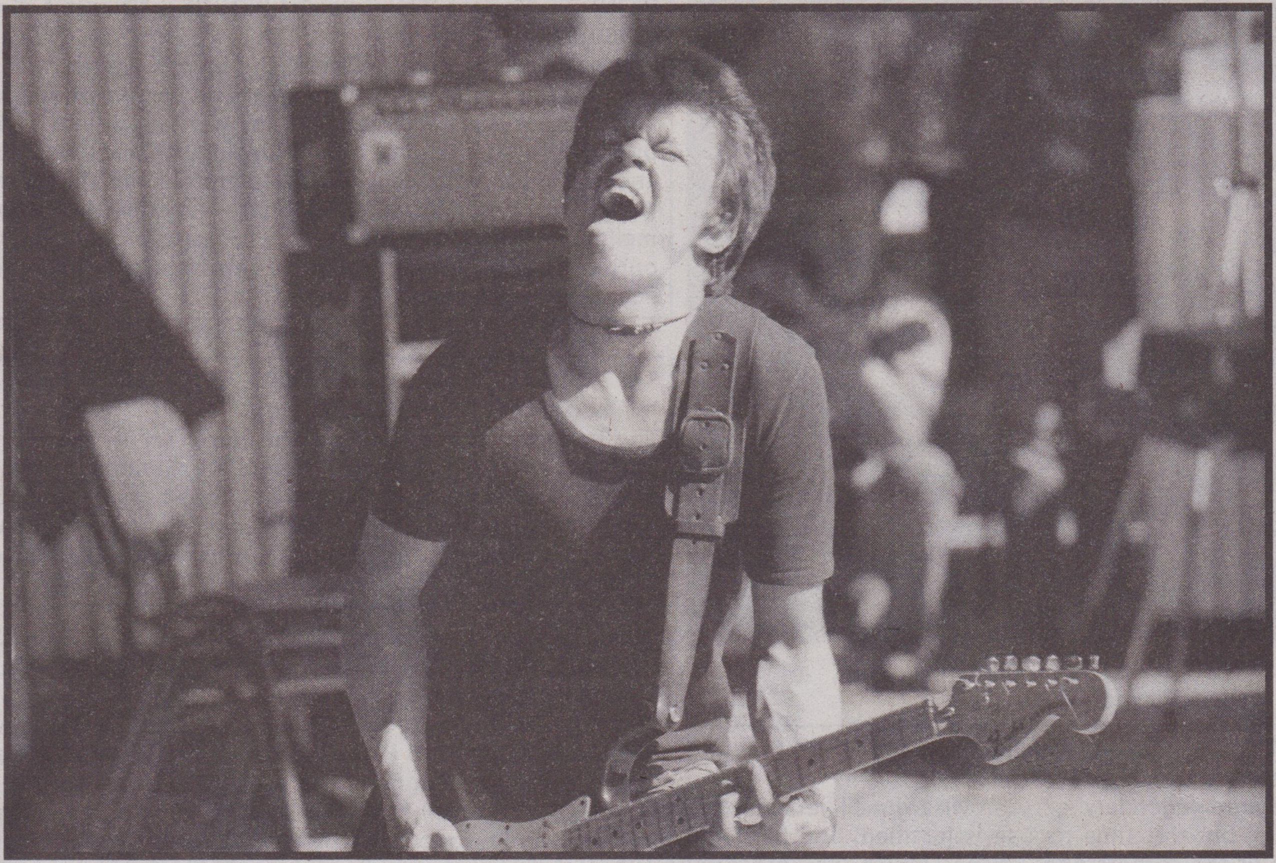
***We are interested in Ron Miller's side of the story–get in touch if you know him.***

# VERITAHROJA:

## SUOMIPUNKIN SALATUT SÄVELET 1979–1983

## BLOOD STAINS: A NEW FINNISH RARE PUNK COMPILATION (1979-1983)

### Another guide to hard-to-find early Finnish punk by Juho Hänninen



# RATSIA

I have finished yet another compilation of unknown and unheard punk rock from the Finnish 1970s scene! It took a year, but the sequel to *Kuoleman Tappaneet—The Death Killers*—is ready. When the first compilation's focus was on self-released material, this time it's all about hidden gems, unpublished songs, and rare demos. File under Rattus, Ratsia, Outo Elämä, the Rash (predecessor for KOHU-63).

Let me pace myself. During the last two years I have been digging around record collectors' 7"s, weird Finnish compilation albums, and demo tapes sent in by bands. I have archived it all with a Finnish organization, but I don't assume that is interesting to you. What I hope will delight any '77-punk fans day is the collection album I've put together from the cream of the crop.

The album bears the name *BLOODSTAINS* as a tribute to the well-known and well-done bootleg series (the Finnish version of the title is is *VERITAHROJA: Suomipunkin salatut sävelet 1979–1983*). The album is a complementary sequel for *KUOLEMAN TAPPANEET: Punk rockia pienkustanteilta 1977–1983*. Just like the last one, this compilation will be released by Svart Records, so head out for your local record dealer. In this text, I will introduce the fifteen bands collected on the album. I will start with a brief history on the development of Finnish punk rock, but for a more detailed history on labels and bands I direct you to my article in *MRR* #406 (pages 54–55).

BRIARD's "I Really Hate Ya" is usually referred to as the first Finnish punk single. The single was published in the fall of 1977. Briard paved the way for punks to come, but a bigger transformation was to occur in 1978 when PELLE MILJOONA, EPPU NORMAALI, and RATSIA released their debuts—all with Finnish lyrics. Most of the hundreds of punk bands that sprung up in Finland followed their lead, and thus "suomipunk" was born.

Most of the major labels in Finland ignored the new style of music. Love Records / Johanna Kustannus and Poko Records were the main labels to publish Finnish punk. The labels were located in the capital of Finland, Helsinki, and the second most populated city, Tampere. Thus, during the last years of the 1970s, punk records released in Finland were from bands originating in the bigger cities (though with a few notable exceptions such as RATSIA, featured on the compilation).

Punk exploded in Finland in 1980. Over 40 bands released their debut records that year alone (consider that there are about 100 debut records released during the period from 1977–1981). These newer bands were not solely from the growing cities. Finland was undergoing a major structural change, and the urbanization was withering away the countryside. The new bands from 1980 sprung up in towns with declining populations as well as the prospering cities. Whether the music was affected by this is left to the listener to decide.

RATTUS

**RATTUS – "Täältä Tullaan Kuolema" / RATTUS – "Here We Come Death" (1981)**
The word "legendary" gets thrown around like cigarette butts, but this time its use is justified. The band is one of the cornerstones of the Finnish '82 hardcore scene. Before settling down to the hardcore form the band made two 7"s with more experimental pieces—including a ska song! "Täältä Tullaan Kuolema" is a solid '77-style punk rocker. Later on, the song was re-recorded with a speedier tempo and a more hardcore sound for the *Hardcore '83* compilation (released by Propaganda Records).

**HURSKAS – "Isänmaa Huumaa" / HURSKAS – "Fatherland Dazes" (1980)**
The band was one of the favorites of Miettinen, a productive youngster who ran the Hilse Fanzine and a label to go with it. The band was around for about six months but got notorious because of the singer Johnny Hurskas's antics. In addition to his raw voice, he was known from smashing down venue equipment. Once he succeeded in throwing the door of the venue into the audience, which ripped it to pieces. The band also voted itself onto a magazine's popularity contest list. The song "Isänmaa Huumaa" is a critical take on nationalism and sheepish masses.

**FIRENZE – "Työttömän Arkea" / FIRENZE – "Everyday Life Of The Unemployed" (1980)**
The band recorded a single in the only studio in town. The single was never released, so the song gets to be heard now for the first time in about 40 years. The boys in the band were schoolmates. A couple of them continued on to play post-punk in SYKSY. The others got involved in other things after their three year stint in FIRENZE. For two of the bands members, music became a profession. Is the song title a good omen?!

**WOUDE – "Suoraa Toimintaa" / WOUDE – "Direct Action" (1980)**
The name of the band refers to the band's leader / singer / songwriter / guitarist's nickname. The person Woude was an oddity in the 1970s scene. They were more into 1960s psychedelic sounds and hippie ideology than blood, guts, and the fuzz pedal. The bass player told me the person Woude was pen pals with Patti Smith! Anyway, they played mellow new wave. The song on the compilation is almost the only hard rocker from the band. It's an anthem to take direct action for social change.

**SYSTEEMI – "Systeemissäkö Vika?!" / SYSTEM – "A Problem In The System?!" (1980)**
The song is commenting on the punk scene itself; it is asking if the rebellion and struggle are pointless as long as the punks are part of the system. Thus I assume that the band's name is ironic. You can hear on the track the early heavy metal guitarist Aki Vilkamaa, who went later to have a successful career in RAJU ILMA.

**SABOTAASI – "Kioskikirjallisuutta" / SABOTAGE – "Pulp Fiction" (1979)**
The song—or the recording—is a true artifact. The song was first recorded by the Finnish Broadcasting Company back in the day for a program. The broadcast was recorded by Vote Vasko (the owner of the label P. Tuotanto) as it was transmitted. This recording by Vote Vasko is the only known copy of the original recording—even the Finnish broadcasting company doesn't acknowledge it exists. Thanks, Vote! The song itself has a nice melancholy spirited power pop feel. The lyrics are about pulp fiction.

**RASH - "Paavola" (1980/1)**
The track by the Rash is a true gem. First of all, the singer is Lättä from KOHU-63. Secondly, the song on the album—"Paavola"—was released on a compilation album titled *Hede-levy* in 1981, but the recording on the new compilation is an alternate take with better sound quality. Thirdly, the song itself is a haunting scream of angst that will tingle down your spinal cord. The song is about the mayor of Tampere, Pekka Paavola. The chorus translates as *"Let the youth be in hell / He smiles in the magazines / Paavola, Paavola, Paavolaaa..."*

**NIVELREUMA - "Meidän Sukupolvi" / RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS - "Our Generation" (1981)**
This track concludes the A-side of the compilation. On this take, the pure emotion, spirit, and passion excuse the bad sound quality. The band was probably the first band in Finland influenced by the anarcho-punk of CRASS. According to oral history, the band's driving force Rintsu was remembered as influential in the Tampere scene still in the later part of the 1980s. Even before the NIVELREUMA, Rintsu had started an act called the HAIROWLS, who it's said had a hardcore song in their repertoire in 1978.

**LAPSUUDEN LOPPU - "Tämän Yön On Tää Kylä Meidän" / END OF CHILDHOOD - "For The Night The Village Is Ours" (1980)**
The conspicuous piano intro was a spontaneous decision in the studio by the band's drummer, who was at least to some degree a classically trained musician. The song is about youth taking over the city—cynically, only for the night. Am I the only one who hears a proto-hardcore tendency in the song's simplified structure and playing style?

**AIV - "Mitään Et Häviä / AIV - "You Will Lose Nothing" (1980)**
The band name is a tribute to the Nobel Prize-winning Finnish researcher Artturi Ilmari Virtanen, who invented AIV fodder (you feed cows with it). The song was recorded for a "pay-for-play" compilation album by local rock acts. The song is a mid-tempo pop punk song with an uplifting message. All the guys in the band have glasses. Finland's Descendents!

**MEAN ONES - "Muusikot Huiputtaa Teitä" / MEAN ONES - "Musicians Are Fooling You" (1979)**
The band was influenced by a variety of music, from 1940s cabaret to the hard rockin' Cream. By the end of the '70s, they were already fed up with punk rock. Revealingly, the song is about how music is repeating itself and even when somebody comes up with something new it's stupid. And the listeners are also stupid. What more to say, true punks!

**RAPPIO - "Harha" / RAPPIO - "Illusion" (1983)**
The band's guitarist got his first lessons from the guitarist and bassist of RATSIA, even though they lived 50 kilometers (30 miles) apart. So small was the music scene in Northern-Middle-Of-Nowhere Finland. The fact that the band came from a town with less than 10,000 inhabitants didn't stop them from trying to make it "big." The band was quite successful in the festival circuit and ended up playing over 350 gigs before changing the band name into KAUPUNGIN KAUNEIN and the musical style to plain rock in the mid 1980s.

**PUPUKUSIKKO – "Korkeajännitys" / Six Rabbits – "High Voltage" (1980)**
A really nice punk-pop rocker about a comic book dealing with WWII. There are also other adorably geeky elements such as the bass intro and the singer's voice. I wish I could have played in PUPUKUSIKKO.

**RATSIA – "Kloonattu Sukupolvi"/ RATSIA – "Alternative Ulster" (1979)**
RATSIA is a quite well known Finnish 1970s punk band. This is their translation of the Stiff Little Fingers song "Alternative Ulster." The song was made for a demo tape that the band sold hand-to-hand and in the fanzines. The demo ended up in the cassette player of Atte Blom, who ran one of the few record companies in Finland interested in rock music. The band was signed and made a successful career with three LPs, etc. On the demo, the drummer was only in his pre-teens and played in the band without permission from his parents. When he got caught, the fun ended, and on their first full length a new drummer is present.

**OUTO ELÄMÄ – "Mä Vihaan Sua" / OUTO ELÄMÄ – "I Hate You" (1979)**
This song should by all means be spelled in all caps—such a wall of hatred it is. In the song, you can hear the early guitar playing and songwriting of Otra Romppainen. Romppainen played in the celebrated MANA MANA from the late 1980s until the suspected suicide of Jouni Mömmö in the early 1990s. But that is another story for another time...

Good luck finding these songs online! To check 'em out, look for the new record, available now through Svart Records! Wanna share some details about some punk obscurities? Write to us and we'll make it happen: mrr@maximumrocknroll.com

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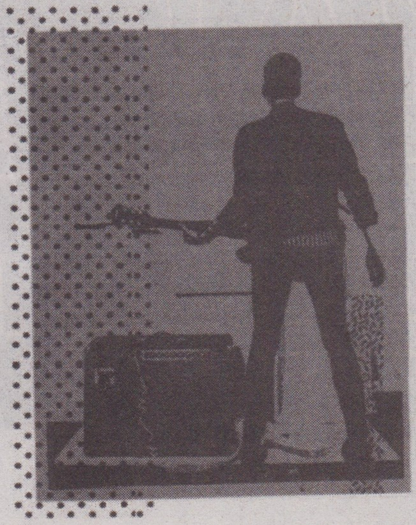

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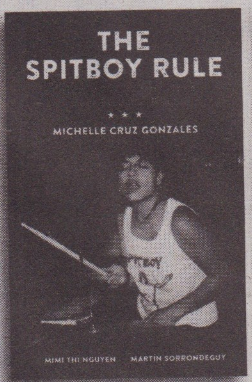


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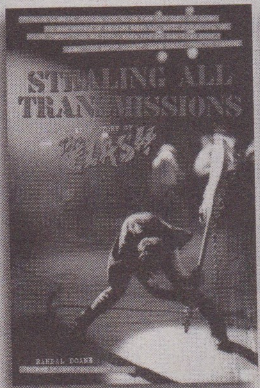


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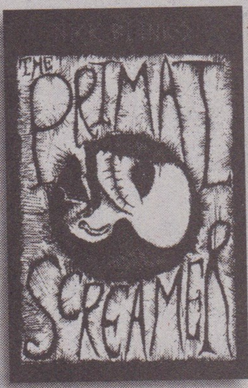


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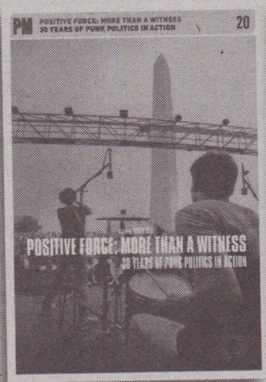


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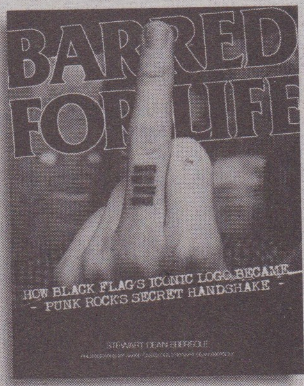


Barred for Life: How Black Flag's Iconic Logo became Punk Rock's Secret Handshake by Stewart Dean Ebersole

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# CLOUD RAT

*Michigan's Cloud Rat is no ordinary grindcore act. For the duration of their nearly eight-year run, they have been a constant force to be reckoned with among punks and heshers alike. Not content with merely writing brief blasts of fury, Cloud Rat is unafraid to incorporate elements from a number of musical styles into their palette, including elements of crust, sludge, D-beat, and even screamo (among others) to create a spectrum of sound that few grind bands achieve.*

*I wanted to know more about what drives Cloud Rat to keep evolving, so I caught up with them via email to chat about their career and what keeps them so artistically fresh.*

*Interview by Joan DeToro.*
*Photos by John Cates.*

**MRR: Cloud Rat has been active now for quite a long time now! As an incredibly active band, have you noticed any changes in the DIY community in your hometown and abroad?**

Rorik: We've been active for eight years now! It's hard to believe that we've held it together this long. *[laughter]* Most of the major changes in the DIY community and basically everywhere else that I've noticed are how much social media has warped perceptions and how it's now the primary tool for promoting shows, ideas, activism, records, tours, merch, and basically everything else. Which I don't think is necessarily a bad thing, but it is weird to experience. Going from one city to the next and generally everyone knows and talks about what everyone else is talking about instantaneously...Very surreal hive-mind stuff. Also it appears to me that punks are getting older, with a lot less young people around. This could be just because I'm getting older too, and generally associate with folks around my age, or it could be because punk and metal are literally aging movements / genres, or because all ages spaces are becoming increasingly harder to sustain, orw because intoxication culture generally being at the forefront of it all (which I'm guilty of partaking in as well), etc. Although on a positive note, if my thirteen-year-old child and their peers are any indicator, kids nowadays seem like they might be actually smarter and more "woke" than previous generations. So maybe they'll stay wise and opt out of punk entirely, and make real positive change along the way. *[laughter]* I'm only half joking.

Madison: Living in Detroit from a young age and watching things transition as I get older, I definitely have noticed that people are a lot less inclined politically to be subversive and defend the principles that we consider an important aspect of a DIY music community. People play fast, aggressive music but there has been a lot less of a political message at shows for the past few years. However, socially there is a shift where people are starting to discuss the political climate of the US because it's unavoidable. Everyone has been impacted. I do see people here in Detroit making a huge effort to create DIY spaces, and I do hope as those spaces form their own communities, that there will be more diversity and inclusiveness when it comes to punk.

**MRR: You have changed stylistically over the years, with one of your recent split LPs consisting of one long song. What has led you to this stylistic evolution?**

Madison: When we started the band, I had just turned nineteen. I was living in desperate situations—moving from house to house, in unstable relationships—and it really impacted my worldview. I needed to express myself creatively, and singing in a band seemed like the best outlet—I grew up on crust punk and grind and had real music-loving roots. My mother always listened to everything from disco to heavy metal, so I had all kinds of influences. I played drums at a young age and knew I just wanted to play as fast as possible and hard as I could because I didn't see any women doing it at the time. The same was with grind. With each album, I think we just do whatever we want and

we never limit ourselves. We all come from such different backgrounds and we don't commit to a particular genre.
Rorik: At first it was just gonna be an extreme-as-possible grind project. We got off track quickly, due to our varying musical backgrounds. I write all the guitar / bass junk, and came from Smashing Pumpkins grunge land mixed with Cro-Mags "hahdcouh" stuff paired with Pig Destroyer, Death Side, Bjork, and random epic trance mixes. Our old drummer was into a lot of hip hop, electronic stuff, and black metal, and Madison's music background is incredible and all over the place. So our first recording ever (the self-titled LP) ended up having a bunch of different stylistic influences on it. And we've tried to continue in that vein of experimenting with different influences, concepts, and sounds with each new recording session. For me, the goal at this point is to attempt to conjoin the cerebral with visceral, art with pop, personal with political, melody with dissonance, speed with slow, etc. or maybe to be as hip and pretentious as possible. *[laughter]* The long song thing had been brewing for a few years and we decided to finally go for it.

**MRR: Your music defies easy categorization. Some songs have a very distinct crust feel, while others feel very metal. I imagine that this must lead to a mixture of different people at your shows. What music fan base tends to show up to your concerts, and which one do you feel closer to?**
Rorik: Typically, there seems to be a pretty neat mixture of folks at our shows. Crusters, noiselords, straight-up headbanging metal folks, gothies, hardcores, black metallers, doomers / stoners, mincers, grinders, hipsters / norms, ziners, indie rockers, radical folks, drunks, etc.,

all made up of folks of all colors, genders, and sexual orientations. Probably still a majority of white dudes unfortunately, but that also depends on the town. We are in an interesting place currently, where we still operate primarily DIY / DIT, but also have a foot in the bigger metal / punk world too, thus adding to the diversity of folks who tend to show up. Weird, yet interesting, to note how inclusive the less DIY, more "pro" scene can feel vs how exclusive and alienating punk can feel at times. Big silly blanket statements, but definitely something I've felt here and there. However, I've had far more positive than negative experiences when it comes to DIY stuff over the years so I should just shut my face. Personally, I feel closer to anyone who is kind, real, cool, and not a racist / sexist / poo-poo head. I don't dig cliques very much, so I don't really feel particularly drawn to any one.

Madison: Because our band is so unconfined by any particular genre, the crowd is always unpredictable. DIY as a whole reflects where we are grounded, and because of that, there isn't a specific scene, type of person or music we feel the most connected with. It really is about reflecting our personal philosophies; we don't have any connection to the idea of status. We play music to connect with anyone who relates to what we are doing.

**MRR: Some of the imagery and lyrics used by the band are pulled from esoterica and mysticism. Do religious practices play much of a role in your lives or in your creative processes?**

Madison: Culturally, I come from a spiritual background. My mother is from Eastern Europe, my great grandmother was a fortune teller, and my lineage shares beliefs that are esoteric but traditional for that part of the world—beliefs that are ultimately rejected here in America. Things that we consider subversive or unconventional, a reversion to the practice of witchcraft or spirituality are directly a part of my culture—and I embrace it with pride. When you come from a line of people who are spiritual in a way that has ultimately been rejected institutionally, you are in tune with the freedom of your identity and spirituality seeps into all of your experiences and the way you express them.

Rorik: For me, art is magic, and using your will to create change is magic. So I am often practicing, aware of changes in consciousness and am always trying to learn more. I usually perform little rituals before tours, shows, while writing, during recording, etc. But it's all pretty chill stuff like warmups, changes in perception, visualizing future outcomes—small divinatory stuff. I definitely ebb and flow though, and am often a skeptic. Religions and occult stuff are all fascinating and worthy of study, although of course can all be dangerous in different ways too. Being born in a mid- / late-'80s small town in Michigan during Satanic panic, living in a household where one day my dad would abuse me very badly then the next be speaking in tongues; luring mentally ill and folks struggling with drug addiction home from their church with promise of salvation, performing terrifying and humiliating exorcisms on them in the living room; my mother encouraging me to tell about demonic dreams and experiences with spirits in the house so that she could rebuke them, etc... All of that left me with a complicated relationship with religion and spirituality, to say the least.

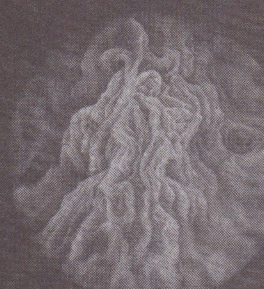
**MRR: Rorik, your experience with your family sounds truly horrific. I can imagine that this affected most aspects of your life, but I am curious if it affected your interest in music at all. Were your parents mistrustful of secular music?**

Rorik: So on one hand, my parents both would hammer into us how secular media was all Satanic and make my sister and I watch tapes like *Hell's Bells: The Dangers of Rock & Roll* (fuckin' watch some of this if y'all haven't, it's ridiculously bonkers). But on the other hand, my mother used to be a hippie and then sang in secular bands for more than ten years, right up 'til I was born, which was around when she became a Christian. One of her last bands covered Iron Maiden and Motörhead. She always loved Rush and a few other key groups that she would let me listen to. My dad became Christian and sober a few years after my mom, and really got the holy fire in him. He burned her entire record collection with help from a couple other church pals. My mom was pissed, but God willed it, right? *Ughhh*. Anyways, this just made me want to seek out the craziest junk I could. I was able to get Christian death metal cassettes from a local book store so that was cool, I had to listen to those when ma and pa weren't around even *[laughter]*. Later, my mom would become way more lenient to make up for how awful my old man was, so I got into more stuff then. My oldest sister had MTV at her house and that was huge influential on a young mind, *Headbangers Ball*, *The Maxx*, *Aeon Flux*, White Zombie, *fuck*! And then as a teen I was living between my sister's house and friends' houses, and it was in those places that I was able to really discover the wider world of devil music.

**MRR: What are some works that have been influential to you and your relationship to mysticism / religion?**

Madison: I listened to my first Alice Coltrane record recently and that is the spiritual bible that I will pass on to you.

Rorik: Lately, *Condensed Chaos* by Phil Hine, and *Liber Null / Psychonaut* by Peter J. Carroll. In the past, *Berserk*



by Kentaro Miura, Terry Pratchett, Ursula K. Le Guin, Neil Gaiman, various other sci-fi / fantasy where you know the writers are into some shit. Lots of Crowley, absolutely. Mushrooms and other hallucinogens are probably the single most influential thing though, really.

**MRR: What are the sounds and ideas that are currently influential to you? Have these sounds affected your songwriting process?**
Madison: Screaming toddlers. *[laughter]* I take care of children for a living so that's what I hear on a daily basis. As for music I've been listening to all kinds of stuff. Defuse from Japan, Can, Angel Olsen, Gary Numan, Red Lorry Yellow Lorry...And always and forever Kate Bush.
Rorik: In terms of sounds: Kevin Drumm is a god, get into it if you like drone / ambient / noise. Björk – *Utopia* is a fucking masterpiece, of course. Bell Witch, Primitive Man, Pig's Blood, Northless, Disrotted for the metal spectrum. Sow (Virginia), Bleedside (Philly) and Closet Witch (Iowa) on the punk spectrum. Zola Jesus, Drab Majesty, are all real good...Also plenty of Miley Cyrus / Halsey / Lana Del Rey and Future. Free jazz. Classical music too, as my older child plays piano and viola. My youngest is still a little one, so I hear the Wiggles a lot, also they are a massive little death metal fan, so that's cool.

In terms of ideas: All of the epic fantasy I've been reading as well as trying to be more present and proactive in bettering myself and the world around me the best I can. Our songwriting process is always all over the place, and all of the aforementioned sounds and ideas are definitely affecting that process. Was thinking our next batch of material will be drone-pop with some blast beats, strings and samples of a computerized voice reading Twitter feeds generated by some weird algorithm. I don't have Twitter but I'm assuming it's awful?

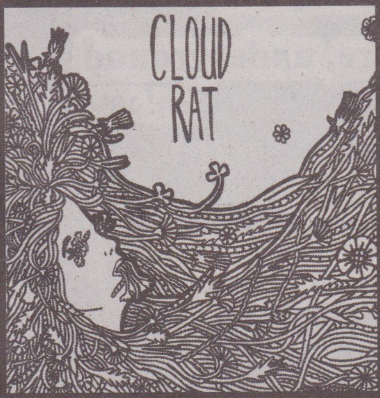
**MRR: No comment on Twitter. Given that you've got a broad range of people coming to your shows, have you had any unique or interesting encounters with concertgoers?**
Madison: I can't count the number of times where I had to refuse hugs from dudes after I was done playing. I've had men scream "oh my god you're a girl!?" right in my face... Once I had a woman try and tear off my clothes on stage which was one of the most awkward and violent things I've ever experienced, so I think after eight years I have seen and met some pretty insane people from the complete spectrum. Sometimes really amazing people, sometimes reeeeally fucking intense people.

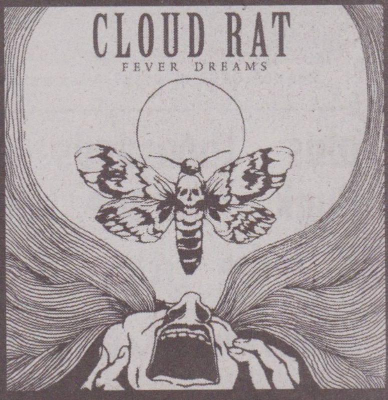
**MRR: Do you have a favorite show that you've played?**
Madison: Hmm, my favorite show was in 2010, I think. We played Aysia and Nevin's home (from IFB Records), and it was so packed people were hanging from the ceiling, flipping everywhere. Merkit played one of their last shows and I'm pretty sure I almost landed a cartwheel during their set. The energy was incredible, and at the time I had never experienced anything like that in my life. I was covered in bruises and it was *greaaat*.

**MRR: On *Moksha*, you did a cover of "The Needle and the Damage Done" by Neil Young, which needless to say is stylistically very different from the material that you tend to write. Why did you cover this track? Are there other songs that you are considering covering?**
Madison: We covered this song because we all love Neil Young. At the time, our original drummer wanted to cover it because we could relate to it. Everyone in mid-Michigan seemed to be using heroin. We all lost many close friends, and all three of us had our own battles with substance abuse. The song was a reflection of that shared situation and was a good fit. We all love a wide variety of music. I'd *loooove* to cover a State of Fear song or something by the Sound, but that could be hard to execute because we don't have a bass player and we don't plan on getting one really.
Rorik: I'm always toying with the idea of covering something goofy like Tears For Fears or Björk, but I'm afraid that at some point it'll just be "Cloud Rat put a blast beat under *another* pop song" scenario. "Them Bones" by Alice in Chains was super fun but probably a one-off? We'll see.

**MRR: 2017 was an extremely prolific year for you. You released two split LPs, a split 7", and embarked on a pretty massive US tour with Thou, False, and Moloch. What Cloud Rat activity do you have planned for 2018?**
Rorik: We still have a split 7" with Test (Brazil) and split 12" with The World Is A Vampire (NOLA) that are awaiting release, just need to get artwork finished up. We've been taking a break from touring for a bit, trying to regroup and figure out where to go from here. Hopefully 2018 will see us doing some international runs and some short US bits, we'll see. It's tough to make tours work with such disparate schedules. Gotta keep on rolling with it as the inspiration comes though. We just started writing for a full length, although that probably won't be ready 'til 2019.
Madison: Lots of sleep and trying to get myself back into shape so I can have better stamina when I'm running around and pogo-ing.

*cloudrat.bandcamp.com*





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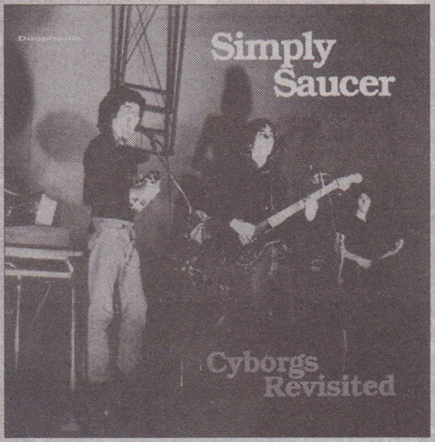

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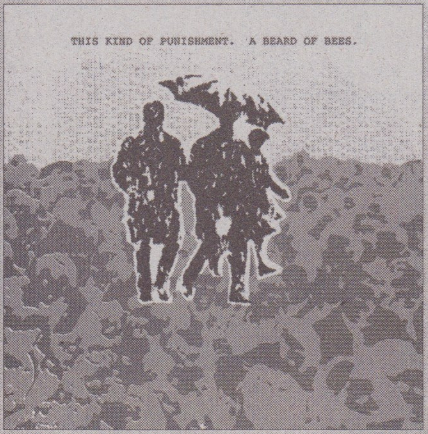

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# ILLYA

*Illya embody a classic punk trope, the small town / small scene band that would be huge if they were operating anywhere else. Through twelve years of active gigging and some dramatic lineup changes, they've produced a fistful of amazing recordings in the traditional Japanese hardcore style. Now, after the instant classic* In Adversity *EP, their first release to see extensive distribution outside their home country, they are ready to unleash their debut full-length album* Microcosmos. *SPHC label head Dan McGregor asks Illya drummer Anton in advance of the release for his thoughts on touring in Japan, the history and philosophy of the band and just what went into creating their newest recording.*

*Introduction by Andrew Underwood.*
*Interview by Dan McGregor.*
*Photos by Natsumi Okano*

**MRR: First, let's talk a little about Illya specifically. Illya has been a band for eleven years. By American standards, this is a super long time. But you only have a few releases, and I think most western punks aren't so familiar with you. Can you talk a little about how and why Illya started? What's changed in the past eleven years? And what's stayed the same? Where are you at now, as a band? What's in the future?**

At first, me and Yokoyama and Electric often hung out at Koiwa em7, a gig space on the east side of Tokyo, and were active in a different style band. But Yokoyama and Electric wanted to play in a more Japanese hardcore punk style, similar to Death Side or Bastard, and they invited me to join in 2007. Yu-ki joined soon, and that lineup was active for about four years.

But Electric and Yu-ki left Illya in 2011, so me and Yokoyama looked for members for about half a year until we found Yutaki, Satoshi, and Tomo_Crows. We wrote new material while playing shows about once per month. After we felt ready, we recorded and released *In Adversity...* on SPHC Records, our first record in five years.

We were consciously imitating the classic Japanese hardcore style for the first few years, but for the last several years we stopped caring about what style of song we are doing—hardcore, heavy metal, or something else. I will leave it up to the people who hear it to categorize it. So we could make "Polar Star" as a result. We are proud that many people convey various impressions.

Our first album *Microcosmos* on Captured Records (Abigal guitarist Jero's label) came out in 2017, and we had a record release bash (which was also Tomo_Crows' last gig with us, due to family obligations) in the beginning of 2018.

**MRR: In a broader sense, eleven years isn't that long for a Japanese band. In the last few years, a lot of Japanese DIY punk bands are celebrating 30-plus years of activity. From my perspective, this is really admirable and cool, and something that is really uncommon here in the USA. Can you talk a little about Japanese culture, and why you think there are so many veteran bands there compared to the USA? Or maybe, what about Japan lends itself to these bands staying together for so long?**

Even though Illya is my first band, I don't

think it is special that Illya has been active for eleven years. I think that the band may continue for a long time because there are many obstacles to overcome.

It's difficult for many Japanese workers to get a long-term vacation that goes for longer than a week. Because of that, it costs a lot to keep a band going on. Most bands exist mostly for one-off gigs on weekends. Illya also has members who live far apart, so we only practice and play shows about once or twice per month, but that is also why there is a craving within us for continuing Illya.

If we make a new song, I have a lot of time to think about the development, rhythm, and lyrics. That is a good thing. I have a little envy about foreign friends taking a long vacation and doing a long-term tour, but if we had the opportunity, we would quickly be exhausted and Illya would not last so long. *[laughter]*

**MRR: Has Illya ever toured before? Or played outside Tokyo? It seems like one-off shows in other cities are really common for Japanese bands. I have to imagine that's because the train network is so efficient and so comprehensive.**

Because of the reasons I mentioned before, we have never toured for more than three days. The places where we have gone are Aomori, Hirosaki, Sendai, Ashikaga, Shizuoka, Okazaki, Kasugai, Nagoya, Toyama, Gifu, Kyoto, Osaka... That's it. So we have not been to the districts of Hokkaido, Chugoku, Shikoku, Kyushu, and Okinawa. The first time we went to was Toyama, we played with Furan at that time.

When Japanese bands tour to other cities, this schedule is common: leave after work finishes on Friday night or on Saturday morning, gig on Saturday night, stay at the show promoter's house / hotel, and head back home on Sunday...Or gig on Sunday night, and back to work by Monday morning. We don't like to tour just to play gigs, so we go to the city as soon as possible to go sightseeing, eat delicious food, and dig for records.

Yeah, I think too the train network is so efficient and so comprehensive, but considering equipment and expenses, I think that it's more common to use a car unless it's in a really far area. However, if you wanna go sightseeing, using Japan Rail Pass may be the most economical.

**MRR: We've had discussions before that sometimes old bands can lose their momentum. But, from my perspective, it feels like it's only older bands that still play this signature style of Japanese hardcore. Are there younger bands you can recommend that are playing this style?**

Digraphia (Tokyo), Doraid (Tokyo), KKG (Sapporo), Dieaude (Okazaki), Last (Tsuyama), Baumkuchen (Tokyo), Detestard (Tokyo), Prize Of Rust (Ibaraki), Weaks (Hida-Takayama), Bakasu ("Fools," Okinawa), Sekizui Chusya ("Spinal Injection," Tokyo), Bumped His Head (Tokyo), Uzou-Muzou ("Impenetrable Phenomenon," Kumagaya), and so on...Of course, there are many good bands in different genres too. I think there are many other bands that play this style, but I don't know all of them. I try to check out new bands by buying demos as often as possible.

**MRR: One thing that's really cool about Illya is that you guys play with a wide variety of bands. From similar sounding bands like Digraphia, to pop-punk like Navel, to fastcore like VxNx, you guys don't limit yourselves or the kinds of gigs you play. Can you talk a little about that, about how you see your place in "the scene," or what your attitude is?**

We don't care what position we have in whatever scene we are in. We think that it is unnecessary to call bands in the same location with a similar style as "scenes." What matters is that bands have a good attitude and a good gig performance, and we think that a "scene" will occur naturally as a result.

I regularly hold a series of gigs called "Uguisudani drunkenness dispute" together with a grindcore band called OGD, and I'm running with the above idea. So when showcasing a band, what genre the band is doesn't matter to me.

**MRR: I want to talk about gigs on a broader level too. We're really lucky in the USA that we can have gigs basically anywhere, often times without overhead costs, and musical equipment is really cheap. But I know it's totally different in Japan. Hardcore Survives Records talked about this in his piece in *Hardcore Anachronistic Assembly* zine, which I thought was really enlightening. I'm hoping you can talk too, in a little more detail, about how different it is to organize a gig in Japan, and how much work (and money!) goes into it, and how punk is able to happen under these circumstances.**

Doing shows without money in Japan is very difficult except for a few places. If you hold an unauthorized gig at private house or outdoors, the police will come in less than ten minutes. If you submit the application form to the government office, you can gig in the park, but if there are noise complaints, you must lower the volume. As a result, many shows now happen in expensive studios or places with soundproofing.

It costs around 3,000 yen ($27 USD) per hour for a studio gig. And if you offer five bands and need five hours, it costs about 15,000 yen ($133 USD). So if the admission fee is 500 yen ($5 USD) and the capacity is 30 people, the profit is 0 yen even if it's full capacity.

For another example, look at Shinjuku Antiknock, which is famous for that Shodoku-gig of Gauze...If you look at the description on the homepage, it says that it costs 136,000 yen ($1200) on weekdays for equipment maintenance costs. If the entrance fee is 2000 yen ($18), you have to have 80 paying guests to cover the costs. That doesn't cover the band's guarantee, mind you.

With practices, especially if it is in a metropolitan area, you can only practice in the studio because of noise problems, so if you practice for two hours, you will spend around 6000 yen ($54), and if you practice for two hours every week, you will spend 30,000 yen ($266).

Speaking of recording studios, the studio called Void)) Lab, which we use, is very cheap and does a good job, but it cost 35000 yen ($310) to use it for ten hours. In the case of *In Adversity...* we paid more than 80,000 yen ($710) in studio costs, including mixdown. Even if all of the records sell, the costs of recording the record make it more difficult to make a profit off of them.

With Illya, we definitely want to stick to high quality recording, so we will still use that studio, but for my another bands, Sun Children Sun and Baby, Please Kill Me, I am recording and engineering by buying a microphone and MTR and doing it DIY in order to keep down the necessary expenses considerably. I don't know if the quality is good or not. *[laughter]*

In other words, if you are going to do a band in Japan—not just punks—basically you will not be paid at all. Despite that, I still feel the need to play in bands, and "Uguisudani drunkenness dispute" is still going strong with some solid backing, so we can hopefully continue doing both for a long time.

**MRR: Dude, it's too expensive! *[laughter]* That sounds brutal to me. You've toured the USA before so you know, we are really lucky to be able to make punk happen with such little financial risk and cost for everybody. So what does everybody in Illya do for work? Are there "punk jobs" in Japan that are commonplace for people in the punk scene? For example, in Washington DC, so many people from the punk scene work walking dogs, while in Baltimore, lots of punks work at bars, and a lot of punks work at the same event / stage-handling company.**

The high cost of band activities in Japan is a problem. But as a positive, usually most of the musical equipment will be available in practice spaces and venues. What you need to start a practice or play a gig is only guitar, bass, and two drumsticks in Japan. You can even borrow or buy those in the studio if you can't bring or forget your equipment. There is no need to pay attention to equipment maintenance or worry about theft of the warehouse for the band. There are both sides in everything, I think.

To answer the topic, I think "punk jobs" are not so common in Japan. Some punks are working at same nursing care company, but I think that working in the same company is not so big. The most common is physical labor, such as construction work, carpentry, forwarding agents, and so on. Incidentally, everyone in Illya works at different places: printing factory, system engineer, front desk of hotel, post office, president of very small company, composer...I think that it is a strange combination.

**MRR: Separate topic, I know Zukk did the art for the *In Adversity...* EP. He is one of the best punk artists in the game these days, his work is at once reminiscent of classic Japanese punk art like Tom and Sugi and yet also totally distinctive and full of his own unique personality. And that's just his gig flyers, he pulls out a much broader style and palate with his record covers and non-band stuff. Can you talk a little about how you linked up with him?**

I met Zukk about thirteen years ago. At that time, he was a drummer in a band called Fido's Brunch from Sendai, and I went to their gigs in several times and I talked to him when I purchased his manga and became friends.

For both *In Adversity...* and *Microcosmos*, we wanted the cover image to express our message. In case of *In Adversity...* we told him to do as he liked, and *Microcosmos* is a conceptual album, so I told our rough image, so the process was different, but as a result it was a wonderful thing. If you are interested in working with him or seeing his artwork, he accepts job offers from overseas, so please contact him.

**MRR: We've mentioned the upcoming LP here and there in this interview. And we've talked about it in detail between the two of us. I think there's a lot to say about it, actually. Can you tell us more about the concept? The influences? The process of writing the songs? The upcoming release show? CD on Captured, LP on SPHC?**

The themes for this album, and for us as a band, are "how can we live and still stand on our own feet?" and "there are many hardships in our life and sometimes we may want to run away, yet there is a way ahead." Although our lyrics are more varied, thanks to Yokoyama's constant efforts, that's all we want to tell you. Moreover, we want to avoid short-term topics or simple wording or curse words as much as we can, and make "lyrics," not "words about a series of feelings." Yokoyama and I also like hip hop, so we like the challenge of rhyming...So we posted a translation of the lyrics to *In Adversity...* to convey our lyrics to overseas people even a little, but on the album, the amount of lyrics is too much, so we don't know if we can do a full translation.

Regarding the music itself, we were careful not to merely gather musical pieces.

We wrote the songs so that the melody and tempo don't become monotonous. When we feel that there is a missing piece, we rearranged the previous song and filled the piece to make it fit. So to be honest, there's not much that has influenced making this album. Of course there are bands that our individual members are influenced by, but you can't finish a good album if you make songs under such a conversation as "Hey, let's make such a song, A part like this band, B part like this..."

Regarding recording, we were conscious that each musical instrument sounds separate and is as clear and natural as possible. It sounds like dumplings to have a sound wall by down-tuning the guitar, using too much compression on the drums, playing in one room...We wanted to avoid such things. Before we made this record, we only had a single guitar, we couldn't play well, didn't know how to mix, so it sounded much more chaotic than we do now. With the new members, we were much more conscious of what we wanted it to sound like.

The CD is currently out on Captured Records, and the LP will be out on SPHC next summer...maybe. It may be held up due to the art. I designed the jacket according to the layout of a CD, so I have to think about another design with the same concept for the LP.

**MRR: Please tell us more about Novembre Records.**
Novembre started as a very private label and distro about fourteen years ago. In the first few years I released a few solo noise projects, and with the Deathlike Silence album I started issuing other people's music. Some upcoming albums on Novembre are the unreleased Disdomestic Violence album and the fourth album by my other band Baby, Please Kill Me.

As for the distro, I deal mainly with domestic bands, especially those with demos and independent releases. I'm picking up a band I think is good but not major, so I will not release the big band of the future. That is another man's work.

**MRR: The real final question: from one record nerd to another, what are the top five Japanese hardcore records???**
This is the most difficult question... *[laughter]* This is where we're at right now:

**Yokoyama:**
GISM – *Detestation* LP
Gai – *Extermination* EP
Gastunk – *Dead Song* LP
Judgement – *No Reason Why* EP
Nightmare –*Footprints Of The Wind* EP

**Anton:**
V/A – *Radiate* LP
Assault – *Blind Customs* EP
Miburo – *Souretsushikku* EP
Padlock – *Reason To Fight* EP
State Craft – *To Celebrate The Forlorn Seasons...* LP
or Endzweck – *A Farewell To Arms* EP

**Satoshi:**
AR-15 – *Just Go This Way* LP
Assault – *Blind Customs* EP
Death Side – *The Will Never Die* EP
Etæ – *Hageshii Inochi Wo Mikudasu Yatsura Ni Tatakitsuketeyare* EP
NAVEL – *Uneasy* LP

**Yutaki:**
Dead End – *Ghost of Romance* LP
Loudness – *Jealousy* 12"
Terror Squad – *The Wild Stream Of Eternal Sin* LP
X.Y.Z.->A – *Metalization* LP
Seikima-II – *News* LP

**Tomo_Crows:**
Guillotine Terror – *Battle Zone* LP
Saag – *Igyou* LP
Muga – LP
Cataplexy – *...Lunar Eclipse, Chaos To The Ruin...* LP
Immortal Sense – *Call It Anything* LP

**Yukihiko:**
Assault – *Blind Customs* EP
Envy –*Angel's Curse Whispered In The Edge Of Despair* LP
Heaven In Her Arms – *Erosion Of The Black Speckle* LP
Realized – LP
X – *Blue Blood* LP

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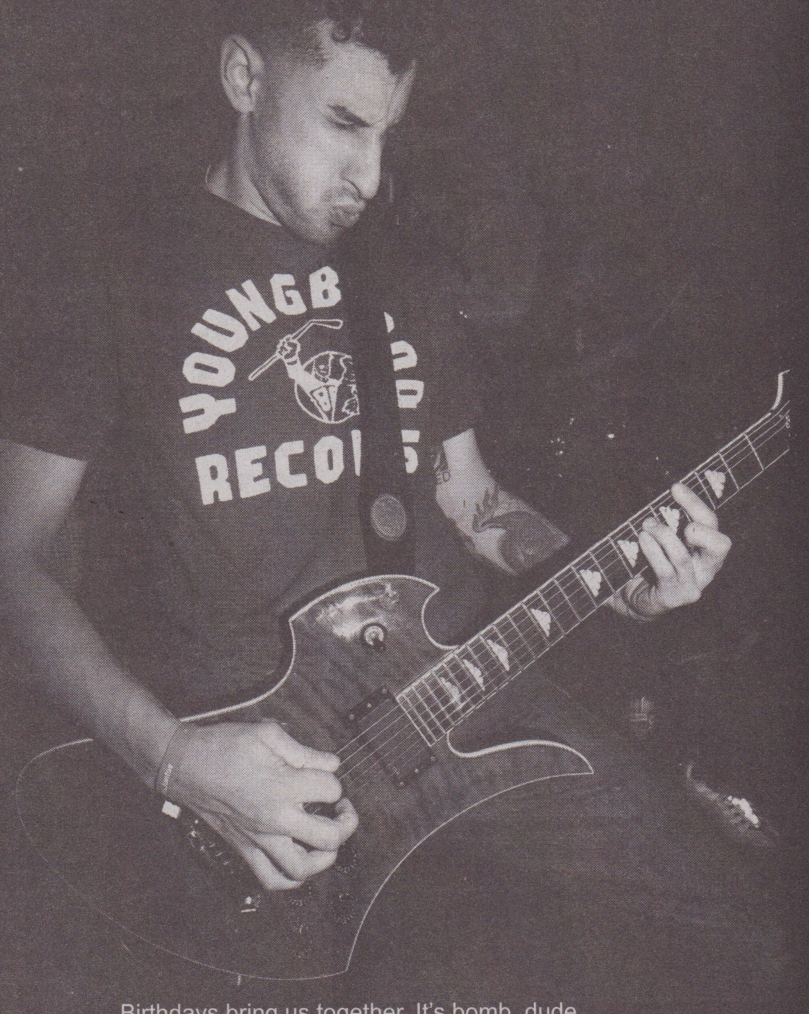
# FORCED ORDER

*I've known Mike and Kyle since I was in high school, and I've watched them sort of grow up through their music. From playing in their early high school bands like What Life Is and Creeping Death to later on playing in Creatures, and then Twitching Tongues and Disgrace, and now Forced Order, these two have continued to progress and evolve. As they enter their 30s, we discuss the importance of balancing music with their personal and professional lives as well as their continued creative drive. This conversation took place outside the Echoplex in Los Angeles on Friday, September 29, 2017 as they geared up for their record release show for their new album* One Last Prayer, *which is available through Triple B Records.*

*Interview by Christopher Gordon. Photos by Dan Rawe.*



**MRR: Your band is pretty spread out over California, how does that affect your ability to tour and record?**
Mike Cesario: For the last year, we haven't really been interested in doing any lengthy tours. We've just done small, short weekends because it just seems more suitable for our needs as musicians. We all have jobs because it's hard to make a living as a hardcore band.
Kyle Thomas: We're all older and have more responsibilities.
Mike: Also, I'm engaged, so I'm not trying to be like, "Oh yeah, I got that fucking money from Forced Order. Let's put that down on our…"
Kyle: Yeah, we got that 200 bucks.
Mike: Yeah, that 200 bucks! "Is that mortgage payment due? Let's go, dude!" I also think it's just realistic that if we all live in different places, life takes you different places.
Kyle: But we have things to bring us together.
Mike: Exactly. Stay together for the music. Don't let it divide you, but don't depend on one thing forever.

**MRR: So as you said, you're both pushing 30.**
Kyle: I'm 30 now. He's exactly two years younger than me.
Mike: Yeah, I'm 28. We have the same birthday, which is why we riff together. Like we were talking about. Riffs brings us together. Birthdays bring us together. It's bomb, dude.

**MRR: What do you do for work?**
Kyle: I drive for Uber right now, and I'm waiting to start teaching.

**MRR: What do you want to teach? High school or elementary?**
Kyle: I don't know yet. I'm going to be a substitute teacher, and then try to figure it out after a while. Just going with the flow. K-12. Anything. I think anything fifth grade or under would be ideal for me because I know I can handle that age group really well. I did day care with that age group for a long time.
Mike: I am a server and an assistant manager at my family restaurant, which is located in Cyprus—west of Buena Park.

**MRR: So you and Mike have been playing together since high school.**
Mike: There has never been a time when we haven't been in a

band together.
Kyle: What Life Is was 2007, right?
Mike: Yeah, we both have bands that the other person is not in, but since 2007 we've always had at least one band that we were both simultaneously in together.

**MRR: So how have your reasons for playing music changed over the last ten years?**
Mike: For me, when you're younger and you're driven by music, your focus is primarily music. That's what you want to do. You drive yourself to become the best musician. Let's say you're going there for hardcore shows. You want the vibe of hardcore. You want that in your life, and that's it. You aspire to be that 100%. Not that I don't want to be that anymore, but as you get older, you have other things that pull you. Some people might not, but at least for me, you know, I want to get married and stuff like that. But I also want hardcore, so writing music that is very particular to our tastes is a little bit more important. Rather than just saying, "Oh, I want to be in a hardcore band, and this riff is cool."
Kyle: I feel like as time goes on, for us, we try to get more out of the music that we write. We challenge ourselves and try to set the bar higher and write a better song. I remember when we were younger, we would write a song, and just be like, "okay, that's a song."
Mike: And that shit was sick, but...
Kyle: But it's not like that anymore. The older you get, I feel like the more seriously you take it. You're like, "What makes this a good song? Does this actually move me? Does it do anything for me?" It might be a fine song, but is it necessary? Does it need to exist, really?
Mike: Exactly, we don't want to write filler songs for ourselves. Of course, we don't want to write filler songs for other people to hear, but mainly because we don't want to write them for ourselves. Writing music in general is just something we have to do. Once you start, you can't stop. I mean you can, but why stop?
Kyle: Once you sink in, and you understand the concepts of key changes and tempo changes and little things that set you off, and you figure out how to actually pull them off, that's when you search for that little thing in a song that...
Mike: Yeah, for example, in pop music. I love pop music, but some people might think it's so monotonous. Like, here's the chorus, here's the pre-chorus, here's a verse. And it's like, yeah, but that's all that that person wanted most likely, and they're doing what makes sense for them in their brain. So when you hear something with key changes or that is interestingly weird, or maybe it doesn't even sound good, but that's what that person wanted. That is like them, you know what I mean? So when we write music, we kind of define our own feelings with it, which is basically music in general.

**MRR: For Forced Order, you learned how to play guitar for this band, which was a lot later in life. It's pretty inspiring.**
Mike: I had a guitar for about a year before the band started, so let's say 2013. The same one I use now, but it didn't have cool pickups or sound the way I wanted it to. I started with that, and I knew how to do triplets and that's it. I could play one riff. I understood the concepts. It's just putting in the work. From being a drummer and understanding Kyle's riffing, and understanding the way it works, because we work together when writing songs—I kind of understood how things worked, it just became a physical skill to acquire. Same with drums, I learned as an eighteen-year-old, which is a lot later. Granted, I play guitar a lot more. I like guitar a little bit more than drums, but I think that you can pretty much do any instrument if you just put in the work. You can be 50 years old. It doesn't matter.
**MRR: *One Last Prayer* just came out on BBB. What did Sam Yarmuth say to convince you to move from Revelation**

**Records to BBB?**

Kyle: We didn't want to do another record with Rev, and we wanted to work with someone else.

Mike: Yeah, Revelation is obviously a legendary label, but I think working as a contemporary, smaller hardcore band, it's really hard to feel that push. Obviously, they're legendary, and they have bands from the past that are the most important to them. It's awesome, and we love those bands, but with BBB it's contemporary, and they're currently pushing those bands.

Kyle: And Sam was just the most enthusiastic person that was hitting us up about it.

Mike: Sam was very enthusiastic and was very easy to work with. If he knows what our needs are, and we ask him for something politely, he doesn't make a fuss about it. So if anyone is interested in signing to BBB, and they have good music, it's fucking sick. Sam rocks.

**MRR: In everything I've read about the band, you always get compared to bands like Ringworm and Integrity, and I'm wondering how long do you have to be in a band before you stop sounding like your influences and start sounding like Forced Order? And it doesn't have to be specific to this band, but I mean more in the grander scheme of things.**

Mike: I love this question, by the way. Forced Order is, I would say that, not to talk about my own band like this, but I think we did a good job not sounding entirely like our influences. We did start with our influences that were very open to what we liked. We rocked the shirts that we liked, and we still do. But I think people in the hardcore scene notice those things, especially in Southern California because there wasn't another band that was heavily influenced by metallic hardcore, early Ringworm and stuff like that. And I love all metallic hardcore for the most part, even later Ringworm and shit like that. So we let that shine through, and people can take it for what it is. But we don't really want to rip off a sound in general, because why write the same thing twice? Not just for Forced Order, but for any band. You can do it, but at the end of the day, you want to make something of your own. If you try and copy someone else's riff or part, it's probably not going to sound as good. It's harder to aspire to be something better. Kyle and I were talking about how we want to do riffs that are really satisfying to us, and parts that are really satisfying to us, with parts that are weird and intricate and don't really make sense on a fretboard, but they do in the grand scheme of things. That's what makes us, us. I'm not saying that bands like Integrity and Ringworm don't do that, because they do, but they do a very good job of doing their style.

Kyle: And you can only go so long ripping off other bands. Our first EP is literally just a compilation of a bunch of rip-offs of other parts of Cleveland band shit.

Mike: And it's fun.

Kyle: It's sick, but after that, you have to figure out how to make it your own.

**MRR: So you're stoked on the new record, and you think that this is a Forced Order record?**

Mike: Oh definitely. I would say that this is the pinnacle of our sound. It's everything that we've ever really wanted in the sound, just translated onto a record. For instance, on our first record, we were talking about how you could hear more of the influences, and that's sick because we wanted that vibe. We wanted the Cleveland vibe, that's what we aspired to do. We went and recorded with the dude Bill Korecky to get that sound, and to have a little bit of that substance because we just like it. But now it's our own that kind of shines through.

*forcedorder.bandcamp.com*

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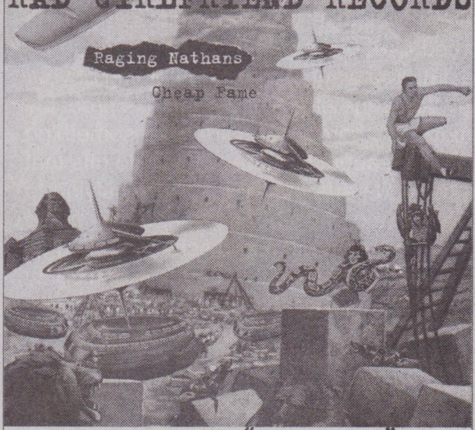


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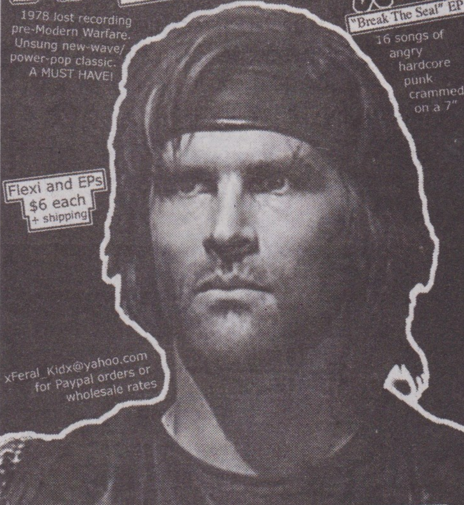

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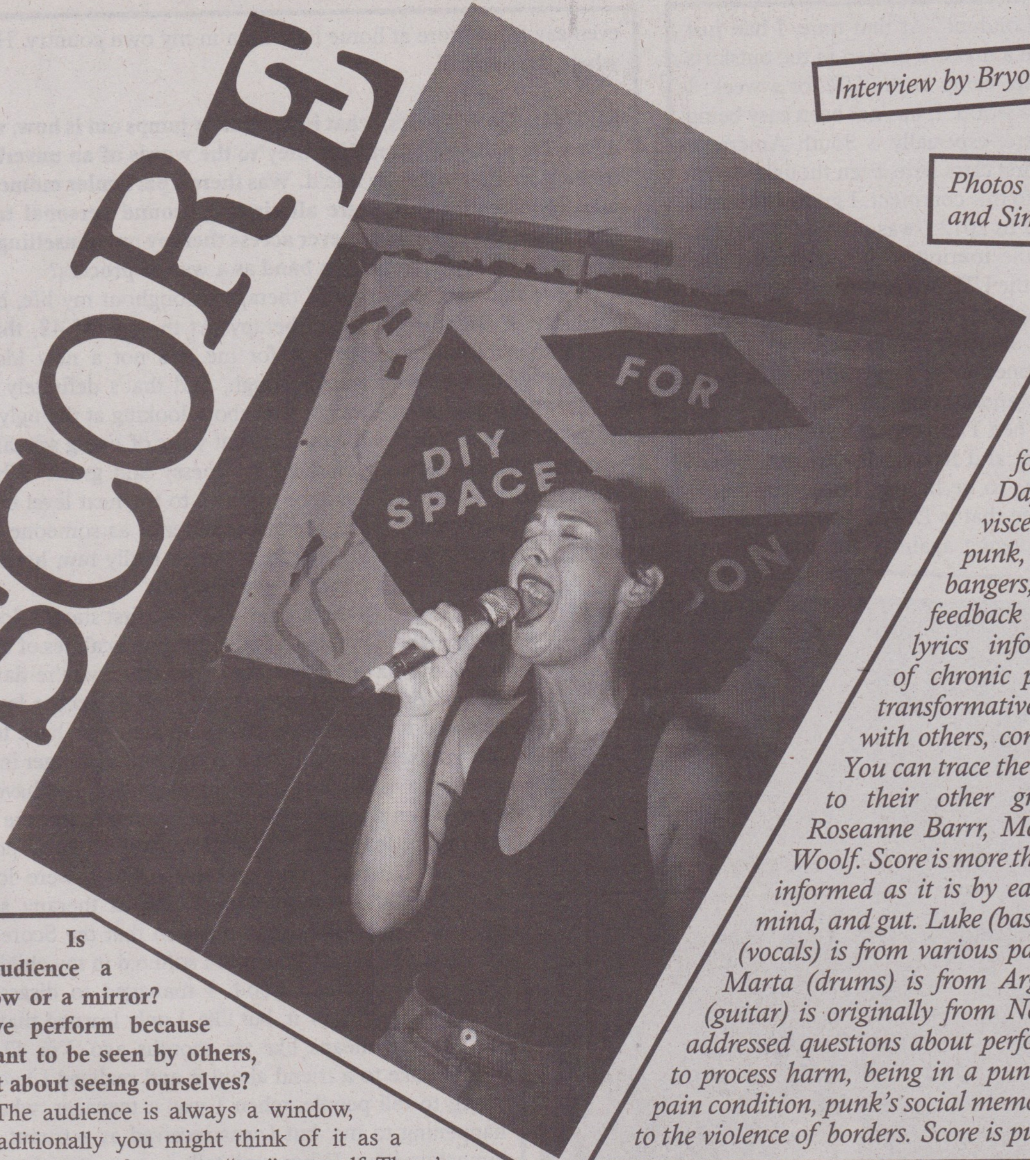
# SCORE

Interview by Bryony Beynon.

Photos by Joe Briggs and Simon Marsham.




*Score is a band that is active in London, UK. They formed on Christmas Day 2015. Score plays visceral and pounding punk, totally bilious bangers, unrelentingly sharp feedback that wails over yelped lyrics informed by experiences of chronic pain, trauma and the transformative power of connecting with others, connecting with yourself. You can trace their sonic preoccupations to their other groups, which include Roseanne Barrr, Major Malfunction, and Woolf. Score is more than the sum of its parts, informed as it is by each constituent's heart, mind, and gut. Luke (bass) is from London, Sop (vocals) is from various parts of south England, Marta (drums) is from Argentina and Georgina (guitar) is originally from New Zealand. Members addressed questions about performing punk as a way to process harm, being in a punk band with a chronic pain condition, punk's social memory and punk as a salve to the violence of borders. Score is punk.*

**MRR: Is the audience a window or a mirror? Do we perform because we want to be seen by others, or is it about seeing ourselves?**

Sop: The audience is always a window, but traditionally you might think of it as a mirror. As you perform, you "see" yourself. There's times when you're free and you're not thinking. You're conscious of it. How do I want to be seen? Do I put on the horror cloak? In Score, I want to be as vulnerable and in tune with my own emotions as possible, but I'm still always conscious of "my arm goes here," "my face does this," "I want to create a menace." Perhaps traditionally you see yourself through their eyes, so they're a mirror, but from performing for years and now being a front person for the first time, I realize that the audience is always a window. A window with some reflection. When you're not performing, you might be an audience member at other times, so you carry an image of what people might see when they look at you, but you'll never quite get there because you obviously can never see yourself through their eyes. Can you tell I used to be an artist?

**MRR: Yes! Albeit mostly from my treasured memory of lying on a beanbag in the Tate Modern gallery trying to figure out which vagina in the video art was yours.**

Sophie: I wasn't one of the vaginas because they didn't ask my permission! I was a bum. It wasn't the upshot, but I think my bush was on there. You couldn't see the lips.

**MRR: For those of you who aren't originally from London, how did you personally end up here and what is your relationship to the big bad city?**

Georgina: I grew up in New Zealand. I arrived in London after travelling around Europe. Now I have lived here for more than ten years. When I arrived in 2002, London was so different; there were so many things going on I didn't know were possible. Before I participated in this queer / DIY scene, I was part of a squatter punk scene. That was before the laws changed, when we could squat residential properties. There were squatted practice spaces and venues like the Poison Club, Rat Star, and Death Drop, but now punk has to be legit and I think it really took something away. It was like the rug was pulled from under a scene and it changed overnight. Everyone is clean now and have jobs, and they hate crusties. *[laughter]* I feel like I'm in such a liminal space now. The bands I play in perform in predominantly queer / DIY venues, but I still feel invested in my past scene and me and my best friend put on more crust and hardcore punk shows together. That scene could be problematic, but it felt like a community, not a scene, and I miss that.

Marta: I came to London for the first time in 2012, when I started playing with this band called Los Cripis in Argentina and they were

like, "We are going to London!" At that time, I had just moved to this house with a massive garden in the outskirts of Buenos Aires, but after being in the UK for a week, I felt it was my place in the world. It has not been easy being a woman immigrant here, especially a South American immigrant. We are not first class here, even though lots of us are somehow related to this continent. I guess Europe is in general a bad relative. In 2012 I was stopped in Calais, France and arrested while touring with my band at the time. I was banned from the UK. I went through a personal hell to come back to England, which took me one and a half years. I understand some people have it worse than me, of course, but was one of the most painful things. I was just cut out of my life and my friends because of where I was born, basically. When I came back, the anxiety of everything being different and having to start over again was also a big challenge. To be honest, music, the punk community, and the space that is DIY Space for London gave me a sense of belonging again. I can even say I feel more at home here than in my own country. Home is where the punk is!

**MRR: In Score's lyrics, what immediately jumps out is how, written down, they feel so blunt, like they're the words of an unverbalized inner voice that is finally mic'd. Was there a particular moment that made you realize they were all circling around personal trauma? Given that a lot of people never access therapy or counselling, what do you think about fronting a band as a way to process?**

Sop: I've had various forms of therapy throughout my life, but I'm currently in cognitive analytic therapy. At the age of 42, this feels like a transformative experience for me. It's not a new idea that making music can be therapy, though, and that's definitely how I used it. With Roseanne Barrr, it was about looking at the ugly, using lyrics, and looking at desire and different ways of living sexually and romantically. It's horror, it's dirty, it's messy and gross. When we started Score, it felt like a chance to move to the next level of using lyrics as a therapeutic outlet for my experience as someone with a chronic illness. I can't help but be really raw, honest and intense, because I try to live that way.

I was writing about pain when we first started Score, or so I thought. Thinking through the practicalities of chronic illness and having a romantic life, when you're damaged and you're scared, you wonder how to accept love and care, and it becomes terrifying because you have to look after yourself. This puts you at risk and in danger in really specific ways. Often people with chronic illness have to go home when the party starts! For such a long time I'd be sick in bed for months at a time, away from all possible romantic liaisons. I thought these lyrics were looking at crushes and fear and love, then at therapy session recently I had this huge realization that the Score lyrics were actually about the abuse I suffered in my childhood. I had a violent childhood. I managed to disassociate myself from a lot of it, but like, I only learned that word and what it means like six months ago. I'm 42 years old. I spoke to a friend about it and realized I had been trying to tell people, when I was a teenager, what was happening to me, but I was received as a truant and a hypochondriac. When you talk in your twenties about this stuff, everyone was just thinking about themselves. I realize now that I disassociated from it all so much that I don't even remember it. So I was writing about my experiences without knowing that's what those songs were about, until I really looked at it.

All violence is wrong, but this was the seventies, and I remember when the law came in making it illegal to hit your child, and laughing at how it was a bit too late for me. Basically, I started having flashbacks and realized wow, all these memories are in there! I'm shocked, horrified, and fascinated by all this, because there's such great distance between me and that time—me and my relationship with my Dad, who I love. I know that he knows, and I know that we're never going to talk about it. The penny drops further at every therapy session. Not only did I disassociate from bad stuff, but also the good stuff. Even with Score, I struggle to feel the feelings that it would be normal to feel, so maybe doing this band is a way of forcing myself to feel something.

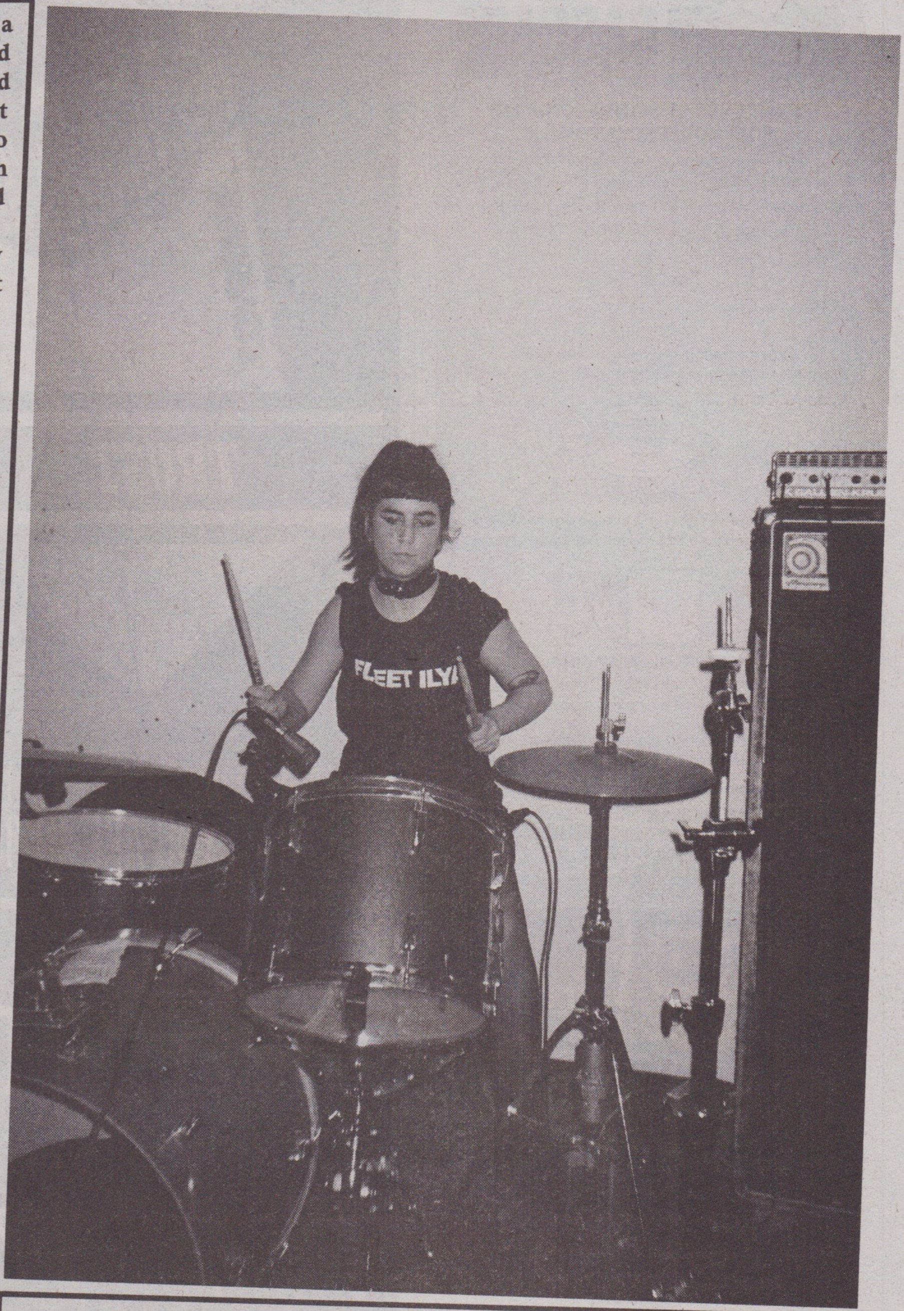
**MRR: An interesting thing with writing punk lyrics is that we might be naming harms or pain in a really**

**declarative way, but it's also usually void of a specific context, so lyrics become this generalized thing that people listening to can in turn read their own pain or story into. You've spoken about playing gigs when really you've been too sick to do so, either drumming in Woolf or singing in Score. How have you learned to negotiate and name your needs in the group band context?**

Sophie: I have a huge desire to share things so they are useful for other people. These songs are about the difficulty of being lonely, being chronically ill, but also about the danger of being vulnerable and terrified of feelings because of an abusive past. The reaction to Score has been interesting. The song "Sick" is about the frustration of having to constantly repeat your condition and what it means for you, sometimes even to friends who know you well, especially if you pass as healthy or have an invisible illness. I have inflammatory arthritis. People understand pain but they don't understand fatigue, or a variable condition. When I speak about this song on stage, I'm outing myself in a strange way, trying to be honest but also I don't want to be judged in a way I can't control. I want to represent chronic illness from a stage and show what is possible. Last week at a gig I was in so much pain I could barely stand, and I said, "This song's about being sick, and that's what is happening up here right now." There have been queer spaces where I've felt safest giving a shout out to the sick and the disabled, and there have been many others times where I'm really, really sick but still go to play the show and manage to play being driven by the adrenaline, throwing up in my mouth from pain while my back is turned to the audience.

**MRR: What does it mean to be a radical punk band in 2017?**

Georgina: I guess that's complicated. On the one hand, I feel like punk scenes are often waxing lyrical about themselves. There's little awareness that similar projects or actions were carried out in their city by others who affiliated as punks decades before. This lack of social history is troubling. It makes me think of the consequences of gentrification: marginalized histories are wiped away by the new people moving in. The other side of it is that there is now a more all-encompassing awareness surrounding queer, race, trans, and disability issues, which is really great to see. However, people don't always necessarily attribute this change to the historic influence of movements / groups like the Rebel Dykes (see the recent documentary) or the London squatting scene, and that's what troubles me. The interconnectivity between the past and the present and an appreciation of this is what furthers a scenes inclusivity. Being "punk" and being "radical" mean nothing unless you're actively pushing against hetero / homo normativity and all the other social institutions that work to normalize us. I see being part of Score, a band that embodies these values, and physically contributing to spaces and events that also embodies them, as the main way that I feel actively part of resistance and change. (If this sounds like yr agenda too and you wanna play in London, get in touch with us via Bentfest@gmail.com)




Marta: The punk community is the only space where I haven't been interrogated about my nationality, which happens about one minute after I meet anyone else outside of it, and then they'll ask about my reasons for being here. Of course, as with any other kind of human group there are some flaws, but punk to me is the place where I felt more respect than ever. I guess I've felt like an alien all my life, but the UK, where I actually *am* an alien, technically, it surprisingly is the place where I feel the most integrated, with the punks and the queers and all the other freaks like me. I need a miracle to be able to stay here further, but I just wanna express my gratitude to all the amazing people I've met in the last couple of years. It's refreshing, to say the least, to finally meet people with their hearts, minds, and guts in the right place.

*scorelondon.bandcamp.com*

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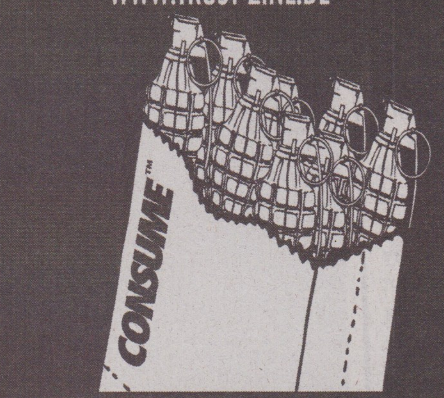


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# LEMURIA

Lemuria has been a cornerstone of the pop punk / indie rock community since forming in Buffalo, NY in 2004. Sheena Ozzella (guitar / vocals), Alex Kerns (drums / vocals), and Max Gregor (bass) live in different cities now, but that hasn't stopped them from releasing new music and touring the world. After releasing albums on Asian Man and Bridge 9, Lemuria decided to self-released their fourth album, *Recreational Hate*, on February 2nd, 2018.

**Interview and photos by Derek Neuland.**

**Additional photos by Riel Sturchio.**

**MRR: What's the story behind the name of the new album, *Recreational Hate*?**

Alex Kerns: Even though the album officially comes out in 2018, it was made available for people to hear at the very end of 2017. It's a title we feel sums up 2017 in multiple ways. I wouldn't say this is a political album, but the political climate we are living in tremendously impacted the mood of this album.

Max Gregor: We spoke a lot about the intention behind using this as the name before deciding on it. It initially came from a song Alex wrote, which funny enough didn't make it on the album. I like the phrase as a touchstone for reminding me how I want to spend my mental energy. There's so much to criticize, so much to feel nihilistic about, really at any time, but especially now with the state of the world. The release of that energy can feel cathartic, but we can also be rewired to view everything through that lens if we practice that method of thinking enough.

Sheena Ozzella: To me, it's an empowering message. The title came from a song that Alex wrote lyrics for, but I think we all have similar feelings from it. 2017 was a really difficult year for a lot of people, politically. Families are split, friendships are tough. Every little issue feels super divisive. Though none of the songs on the album are political, the energy throughout them touches base on those same negative feelings at times and goes hand in hand with trying to figure out how to release that energy, like Max said, in a (for me)

productive way. It's not meant to sound higher than thou, I know there are people who struggle with this, and I'm not saying I'm perfect at it, but I'm making an effort more than ever to try and be better about it without compromising my own beliefs and values.

**MRR: Lemuria has released albums on Asian Man and Bridge 9. Why the sudden change to self-release your fourth album, *Recreational Hate*?**

Alex: A lot of reasons. We self-funded everything and we were really happy with the way the album turned out. We weren't super excited about handing the album over to a third party, where we have to worry about ideas being turned down or feeling limited. Not that any of the labels we've been on have ever limited us in any way. I just think we all knew we'd be way more motivated about the album if we were the ones taking care of the label aspects of it. I used to run a label called Art of the Underground, and there were a lot of things I enjoyed about it, but in hindsight, there a lot of things I would do differently. So this is a chance to start fresh.

Max: Yeah, I think that when we laid out all the components it would take to release the album, we felt confident that we were at a point where we'd be able to do it ourselves. We've been learning a bit as we go along, but it does feel rewarding to oversee all the aspects of the process. That said, Asian Man and Big Scary Monsters have nonetheless been instrumental in supporting our release, not only with distribution but with their insight and care.

**MRR: Some of the early Lemuria releases were Art of the Underground. What exactly would you have done differently that you plan to with your new label, Turbo Worldwide?**

Alex: It's been fourteen years since I first began putting out Lemuria records on Art of the Underground. I'm not really sure of specific things that we are going to be doing differently, but I'm definitely a much more organized person now than I was then. I also have a much better understanding of our band now, and how to customize the release to what I know works and what doesn't for us. I know that's all vague, but we are just beginning with Turbo, so I'll be able to have a clearer answer for you in the future.

**MRR: The song "More Tunnel" on the new album has hints of influence by Weezer and the Rentals. Was this a subconscious nod to Chris Shaw who produced both *Recreational Hate* and Weezer's "blue" album?**

Alex: All of the songs were written and demoed before we knew we were going to be working with Chris. Working with Chris just happened to work out because Max, our bass player, who lives in Texas found out that Chris had just moved from NYC area down to Texas, and he mailed him our demos. We met up with Chris at Bouldin Creek in Austin for dinner to talk about what we wanted to do with the album, and Chris was very easy to talk to about it. We chose Chris because he has worked on so many different genres over the years, and with this album we definitely cover many different moods while trying to be true to one aesthetic. "More Tunnel," specifically, is an extension of what we have worked on in every album of taking 5/4, 9/4, and 11/4 time signatures and applying them to lyrics about identity. Other songs like this include "Wise People," "Congratulations Sex," "Ruby," and a few others.

Max: Yeah, I think any relation to Weezer is a coincidence, or maybe that is Chris's underlying engineering / producing style shining through a bit. He was incredible to work with, though. All his input felt very natural.

**MRR: Given that the band has been around over 10 years, are there any lyrics you are embarrassed by now?**

Alex: Not really. A lot of songs are very candid and specific to people in our lives and I think not holding back on saying humiliating things might help our lyrics be something that people can relate to. Of course there are lyrics I wouldn't write today at 34 years old that I did when I was in my late teens, but I'm sure if I'm still making music when I'm 50 I'll be able to say that about the songs I wrote when I was 34. If you're talking about some of our earliest songs on the demos and EPs that are about sexual exploration, even back then it was a hard thing to write about. Worrying and feeling embarrassed about it would just be a waste of time and an unneeded negative energy that would only stand in the way and possibly influence what I'm writing today.

Sheena: Nah. There isn't one bit of Lemuria lyrics that I'm embarrassed of. It's all a journey. Obviously, some songs will be a reminder of a specific person or part of life that may not be current, but I don't think I could ever write or sing something I wouldn't want to put out there in the world. If anything, I'm proud to still be singing the songs we first wrote as a band.

**MRR: A lot of Lemuria's lyrics are very personal. Do personal songs begin to lose their meaning over time, or does the repetition intensify their original meaning?**

Alex: I don't think they lose meaning. Even though something might not be as relevant to me because it's a dozen years later, that doesn't mean someone who listens to our album might not be going through something similar today. I've had that experience with bands before. There are albums I've owned for over two decades, and then finally, after listening to a song for the 100th time, it means something new to me because I've had the personal life experiences to understand and relate to it.

**MRR: That's a good point! I listen to songs I loved in high school now and I find completely different meanings in them. Each Lemuria album has its own sound, which I'm sure in some way is attributed to what you had been listening to leading up to the writing of the songs. What have you been listening to this past year that you think might have influenced the sound of *Recreational Hate*?**

Alex: I would say Leonard Cohen and the Pete Holmes "You Made It Weird" podcast are the two things that owned my ears throughout 2017. Both of those artists go deeper in to self-exploration than most, I think. Cohen seems to like to dig deeper into darkness, while Holmes is always trying to understand and shed more light onto understanding himself. For film, I would say Shirley Clarke, early Jim Henson shorts, Lynn Shelton, Duplass Brothers, Akira Kurosawa's *Ikiru*, Krzysztof Kieslowski, and my all time favorite, Hal Ashby's *Being There*.

Max: I've been listening to a lot of power pop: Tommy Keene, Robyn Hitchcock, Elvis Costello. Also been listening to Alice Coltrane, *Journey in Satchidananda*, and through that have gotten into Don Cherry, Moondog, and Harmonia. I think, as far as my contributions to "Recreational Hate," I was calling on a lot of country western and folk influence, as well as early Tom Waits. I honestly can't remember what I was listening to when we were working on this, though. Probably *Star Talk* and NPR podcasts. I love the "SpaceTime" video series on YouTube, def binged those at some point.

**MRR: Last year you went on a full US tour with Cayetana and Mikey Erg to celebrate the tenth anniversary of your first**

**album, *Get Better*, as well as a nine-day UK / Ireland tour supporting the album. What was the experience like playing that album in its entirety again?**

Alex: We had a blast. There were a handful of songs we played on that tour that we hadn't played in over a decade. It was great to be on tour with Cayetana and Mikey was well, we've known them since the early days of the band. Cayetana hasn't been around for a very long time, but Kelly and Allegra used to book shows for us when they went to college Oswego, New York. It was great to be able to spend so much time with our friends again.

Max: I had loads of fun—on that tour, I was a fan allowed to play songs from a record I love, so it was a special experience for me.

**MRR: I never thought about it that way. You, Max, were a fan / friend of the band when Get Better first came out, so that was a very unique experience for you. The three of you live in different cities and time zones: DC, Austin, and Las Vegas, respectively. Do you find collaborating difficult when you are so spread apart?**

Alex: No, it's been like this for about eight years now. We don't release things as frequently as most bands do, but we all have our personal lives and jobs. Lemuria is a priority for all of us, and we view it as an art project that we're all working on together. Plane tickets get expensive, but that all fits into being another reason why we wanted to self-release the album, so that we can filter that extra 50% of everything you make that normally goes to the label back into the expenses we need to cover by all living in different time zones. We all make demos and videos and easily send them back and forth all the time. This way of operating wouldn't have worked when the band first formed, before any of us had cell phones and I was still using the public library to check my AOL email.

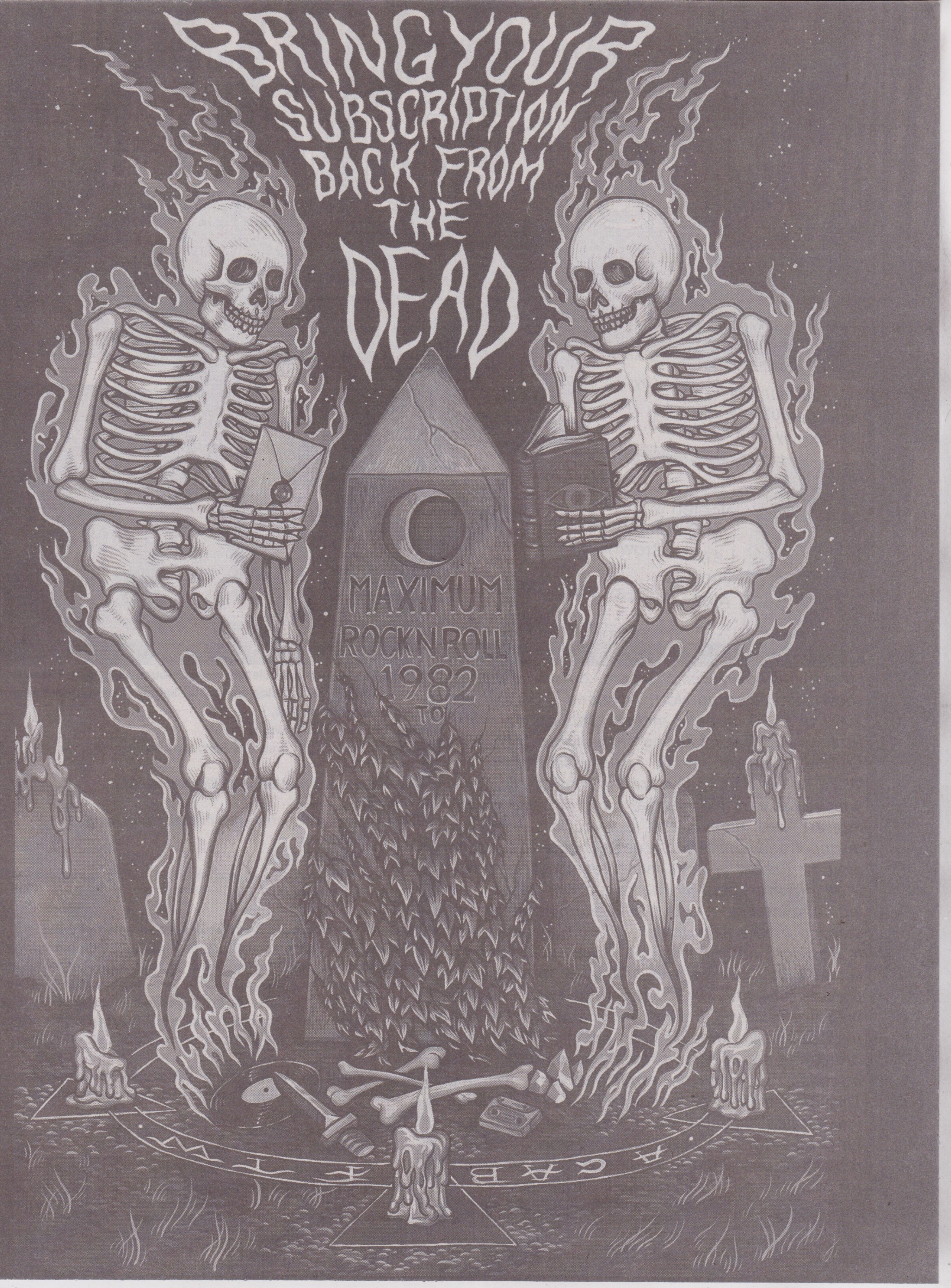
Max: I think sometimes I'd like things to feel a bit more casual when it comes to writing, but really I love that we have impetus to stay super focused with the limited time we have together. In a lot of ways, being separated has been a good thing for us.

Sheena: Distance makes the heart grow fonder, right?

**MRR: What advice would you give to other bands whose members don't live in the same cities / states / countries?**

Alex: It's hard to give good advice because everybody needs to customize their life to make room to work on the things they're passionate about. Luckily, all three of us work jobs that are flexible and let us tour and take chunks of time off. I think the best advice I can give is to pinpoint what your passion is and try to customize your life to make it something you can always have time to pursue. I've been making it work because I now live in a city where I work freelance audio and lighting production jobs and give drum lessons. So I've been fortunate to be in a position where I don't have to ask for time off from work, I can just not book work for the time I know I'll be busy with music. I think everybody's situation would be pretty different, but it comes down to just making sure you clear adequate space in your life for the things that make you truly happy.

Max: Communicate. That's the main thing. Make sure you're still sharing your lives with your bandmates so that you know where each other are at. It does get harder in some ways—travel is difficult, as is keeping people in the loop who you may not see for weeks or months at a time. Aligning everyone's needs with these extra hurdles can be trying, so I'd say that's a pretty big one.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# WOOLEN MEN

*Introduction and interview by Bob Desaulniers.*
*Photos by Matt Radosevich.*

Woolen Men are:
Raf Spielman - drums, vocals
Lawton Browning - guitar, vocals
Alex Geddes - bass, vocals

*I first met Woolen Men on a porch outside of a house show somewhere in North Portland. I think it was 2009 or 2010, but the memory has grown a little fuzzy. I had been hearing their name mentioned around town but hadn't actually seen them yet. Word had it that they were big fans of the Clean, which was and is a positive thing in my book. My interest was piqued and expectations were not disappointed when I finally got a chance to see them play at a show in Raf's living room not long after that initial encounter. The music was tuneful but lean and intelligent with a wild energy that seemed steeped in the Minutemen, Urinals, or early Fall. It was right up my alley and stuck out among the cookie cutter garage rock and other musical dross prevalent at that time. Since then I have had the pleasure of being present for many Woolen Men performances; some jaw droppingly good, some drunk and out of tune, some disappointingly under attended and some uncomfortably over attended. Through it all they never swerved off the stubbornly independent path they have forged for themselves. I met up with them at a bar across from our shared rehearsal space on a rainy night in early November for a chat about music, method, and longevity.*

**MRR: So you guys just released a new album, *Lucky Box*. The overall mood strikes me as being somewhat lighter than your last record, *Temporary Monument*.**

Raf Spielman: Yeah, I would say so.

Lawton Browning: It precedes *Temporary Monument*.

**MRR: It was recorded before? I didn't know that.**

Raf: Yeah.

Lawton: Some of it precedes the first self-titled record.

Raf: That's not true.

Lawton: That's not true?

Raf: No...that's not true. It was recorded before, during and after *Temporary Monument*.

**MRR: Did you approach it as an odds and ends sort of thing?**

Raf: Yeah, they were demos that we made and then put on really limited run tour tapes that we sold on the road. So a lot of those tapes were basically demo versions of what ended up being on *Temporary Monument*. But then after the fact, listening back to all of the songs that we didn't redo, it was nice to realize that they had a different kind of energy, a looser, more spontaneous energy that we really liked.

**MRR: I didn't get the impression that it was just a collection of recordings. It seemed like a perfect response to the seriousness of *Temporary Monument*.**

Lawton: Yeah, well the title, *Lucky Box*, was kind of trying to think about that idea.

**MRR: Where did the title come from?**

Lawton: I just thought it up. I liked thinking about the songs we picked

for it, random songs that didn't make it onto one thing or another, as "lucky" songs that we just kept around because we liked them, you know?
Raf: We didn't want to deceive people into thinking that it was not a collection, but at the same time wanted to make it obscure enough that you would listen to it as a cohesive whole. We didn't want it to be an "outtakes record." We put it together and we thought, oh, this works. We wanted to make it seem like a record.
Alex Geddes: We also had *Dog Years*, which is kind of similar, rougher takes or things that were released before. But I don't think any of us wanted to call it *Dog Years 2*.
Raf: It's nice to think that someone five years from now or ten years from now would find this in a record store used bin and say "what is this thing?" There are some clues as to what it is, but it stands on its own as this mysterious thing. One of the reasons we wanted to put this record out is that at least for me, as a listener, I always appreciate those records. You know, homemade records that are mixed poorly. You can tell that decisions were made really fast and that if they had a second chance they probably would have done it differently. But as a listener, I love those weird mistakes and things that are off. It's nice to be able to make records like *Temporary Monument* or the one we're working on now that are more careful, but at the same time put stuff out that has that free, messed up quality to it.

**MRR: Do you feel the best way to approximate that kind of aesthetic is to actually work that way yourself? Make decisions quickly, keep moving forward...**
Raf: Yeah, yeah, because with those songs it was like—we're leaving for tour in two or three days, or whatever. We have to record the songs today, we're going to mix them tomorrow, I'm going to dub the tapes, then we're just going to get in the car. Make the decision right now. If the vocals are too loud or the bass is too loud it's just like, okay, whatever. But then later you say "Oh, that's great!" You never know what endures.
Lawton: I think there was a little bit of skepticism when we first came up with the idea for the record. When we got a master back, Alex, I remember that's the point that you changed your mind.
Alex: Yeah, definitely. I remember hearing the songs we'd chosen and saying "What are we doing?" "Why are we doing this?" Getting them back mastered they seemed to fit in such a way, it was really cool.

**MRR: Do you feel the significance of your songs can change over time for you?**
Lawton: I can remember how angry and upset I was when I wrote the songs on *Temporary Monument*, but there's been enough time removed that when I try and tap into that feeling now I have a lot of affection for it. Instead of it being this immersive wretchedness, it's now this...Raf, you said something funny, you were like "I'm glad your songs can make you feel like garbage still."

**MRR: You decided to release *Lucky Box* on the See My Friends label. Was there a reason you decided not to go with Woodsist, who put out your other albums?**
Raf: It just seemed like what was the most reasonable thing to do. We don't sell a lot of records, so the most reasonable thing to do is the scrappiest and the most cost effective. There's no shrink wrap and there's no PR. That stuff is cool if someone else is paying for it, but you also feel kind of weird that someone's paying for it.

**MRR: Like you're obligated to them now to return the favor or meet expectations?**
Raf: Yeah, yeah.
Lawton: Ultimately, what we learned from Woodsist is that what really matters more than anything is touring. You can have a cool label and PR, but touring literally is the only way to make people give a shit about your band.
Alex: I honestly feel like Woodsist went out on a limb with us in a way. They invested in us and expected us to do more than we did. It just ended up not being the right fit for where we were at as a band.

**MRR: Is there any part of you that wanted to do that whole thing and tour half the year? Really go at it?**
Lawton: We went to the East Coast and laid out a bunch of money and time and they were bad shows. We tried to do that, but we were not smart about it, and we paid the price. It would be one thing if we lived on the East Coast and we could do New York and Philadelphia and Boston all the time. You can't underestimate how the geography of the West Coast affects bands.

**MRR: Raf, See My Friends seems to me to be picking up the mantle for your label Eggy Records. Is Eggy retired now, or are you still doing that?**
Raf: I mean, it's pretty retired I would say. There's going to be a couple more releases...
Lawton: You never know.
Raf: Yeah. I worked with Stevie and Vince of See My Friends a lot. Both directly and also just being the voice of someone who has had a little more experience doing records.
Lawton: Raf was kind of the advisor for the label.

**MRR: It seems like they have a similar ethos. Providing a low-key place for people in town to put their music out.**
Raf: Yeah, so it feels retired, but only because what they're doing is great and it's what I wanted to be doing. I'm actually much happier helping them and putting a lot of energy into their project than doing it myself.

**MRR: What were your motivations for starting a label, and did it live up to those aims?**
Raf: I remember distinctly moving back to Portland from Providence in 2008. It was a moment I felt like the Portland music scene was really particularly good. Eat Skull, Meth Teeth, and the Whines were happening, and I think the Hunches had just wrapped up. On the experimental side, there was a lot of interesting stuff going on. Grouper was getting more song-oriented. It was a cool time, and it just felt like nobody was releasing music on Portland labels. There wasn't a Portland label that was working with those bands. So in my mind I was like, somebody should try and make this happen. There should be a local label for all this great local music. And, um, I don't think that I did that. But I tried! See My Friends is fortuitous. It feels like there's stuff happening. They're putting out Mope Grooves, which is great. They're putting out Honey Bucket, which is great. They're doing our record, which is great. I think they're in the right place at the right time.
Lawton: There is a moment coming up on us with Woolen Men, Honey Bucket, Lithics, and Mope Grooves all releasing new records. There's an opportunity to present a united front to the outside world, and I think we need to step up our game a little bit and own our ambitions. I would like Woolen Men to be at the front of that in terms of our mouthiness and pushiness.

**MRR: Portland has kind of a bad rap right now.**
Raf: You think Portland has a bad rap?

**MRR: Yeah.**
Lawton: Because of *Portlandia*?

**MRR: Partly, yeah. I've read reviews for my band Lithics that said "Portlandia four piece, blah blah," and I think people initially**

**approach music from Portland with that in mind. Like you're on a unicycle or something. I hope people actually hear the bands and have a different opinion.**
Raf: It almost feels like *Portlandia* versus Dead Moon, and Dead Moon's going to win.

**MRR: So it seems like much has been made about the influence of the New Zealand sound, Flying Nun etc., on your music. A lot of those bands tended to be self-recorded and worked within limited means, was that an inspiration for you as well?**
Lawton: You know, it's funny, I recently went back and listened to the Dadamah record, which I used to like a lot, and I didn't like it anymore.

**MRR: Aw, come on!**
Lawton: I mean, I still love the Great Unwashed... Well, I guess I hope that with our next record we'll really be standing with a unique sound that's our sound and is less a sum of influences. I feel like I've always had that goal with songwriting, but I think we're closer than before. I really want to have people be excited about the three minute long song again, and not just because a journalist can come up with a list of things to compare it to.
Alex: I just want to say, that as the one out of the three of us who came the latest to the Clean and the New Zealand sound, that when I first heard it I immediately connected to it and felt that it was something we all related to. I still feel that way about it. We were making music in a way that wasn't complicated. My relationship to that is still a part of how we make music.

**MRR: I guess what I was getting at was that whole scene was basically in isolation and their working methods were a product of that. They recorded themselves because they had to.**
Lawton: When I saw the Bats at Bunk Bar two years ago, Robert Scott's wife was there, and she was commenting about how much Portland reminded her of Dunedin, and it just made me really happy. It was sweet to think about some weird, unconscious, psychic connection between the music made in that isolated place and the music made in this place, which has a similar feeling often of...You know the fifteen people who are making all the good music, they're your friends.

**MRR: Well, for all the growth in Portland, it's not L.A., it's not New York City or anything...It's not even Seattle.**
Lawton: No, not even. We were just there and it's definitely not.
Raf: One thing that I think is really cool and maybe more and more like that New Zealand scene is the way that, once you get a little bit deeper into the New Zealand thing, there's all these bands that existed briefly that were just rearrangements of other bands. That's something that has happened a lot here in the last year that's really exciting to me. People right now seem more willing to do something for fun and record it. People from different bands are starting side projects and that kind of thing is great. It makes things feel really vital.

**MRR: Conversely, what do you as individuals get out of working with each other that you can't get working with other people?**
Lawton: I think there's just a level of trust that operates when you've been together making art for that long. You can trust that other people's

ideas are going to, not just be good ideas in themselves, but make your ideas better. There's a sort of group unconscious mind at play.

**MRR: So you know what to expect...That's not always a good thing.**
Raf: It's half knowing what to expect and then half trusting that what is unexpected will ultimately be fruitful. I feel like no matter what the other guys bring to the table as far as songwriting, even if it's something I don't like right away, I'm not going to shoot it down. Almost as a rule, I'm never going to say no to a song, because I trust that it will become something good.
Alex: It has a lot to do with the way that we have figured out how to write songs together. I guess I say that because I play with a lot of different groups and it doesn't feel as natural as when I play with these two. We developed our own way of writing and it feels very natural and it works.
Lawton: I feel like after this long, the challenge is to surprise each other with new ideas.

**MRR: You used to swap instruments on stage. It's been a little while since you stopped doing that but there still seems to be a pattern of creative restlessness. You had stand up drums for a while early on, and recently you were only playing acoustic guitar live. There's a continual reinvention of how you present what you're doing. What precipitated some of those changes, and do you expect that there will be more of these reconfigurations to come?**
Lawton: Huh. I wonder. The stand up drums...I can't even remember why we started trying to do that.
Raf: I don't remember the reason for any of those changes!
Lawton: The acoustic guitar was the same. I guess we managed to get a pickup on the acoustic guitar and plug it in. But you know, it never really worked all that well, Bob. *[laughter]* It was always feeding back like a motherfucker.

**MRR: Well, they're tough to wrangle.**
Lawton: We just ended up bailing because it was so stressful. I guess in our current configuration we're all settled into our roles, but I don't know. There is a lot of keyboard on the new record, I've been taking piano lessons, so maybe we'll do that?
Alex: I have a saxophone at home that I never play.
Raf: Regardless of specific reasons for each individual change, I think the underlying idea is—I see a lot of bands that show promise and are interesting, but upon getting a small amount of local fame or a local following, they get trapped into thinking that something is expected of them. I think it's important to remind yourself that nothing is expected of you and you should just do whatever you want. Nothing is on the line. And you know, if five people are annoyed that you didn't do what you did last week, they can deal with it.

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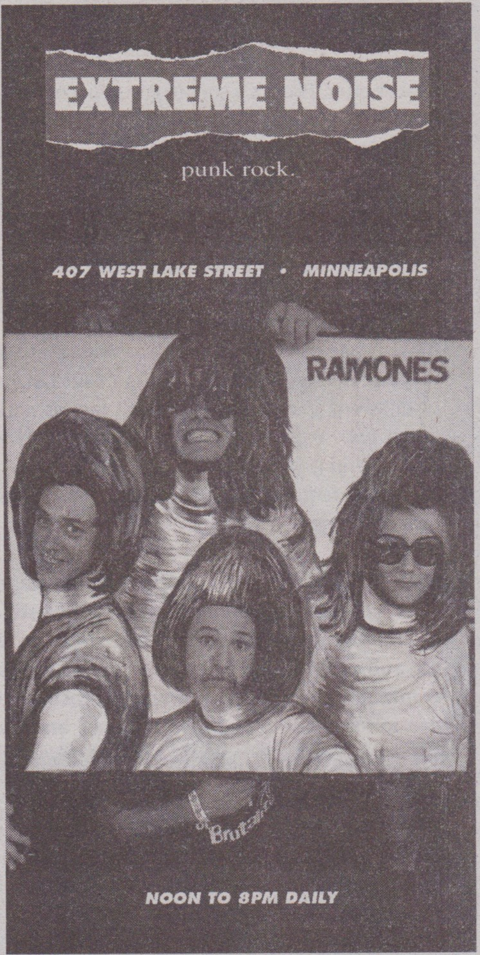
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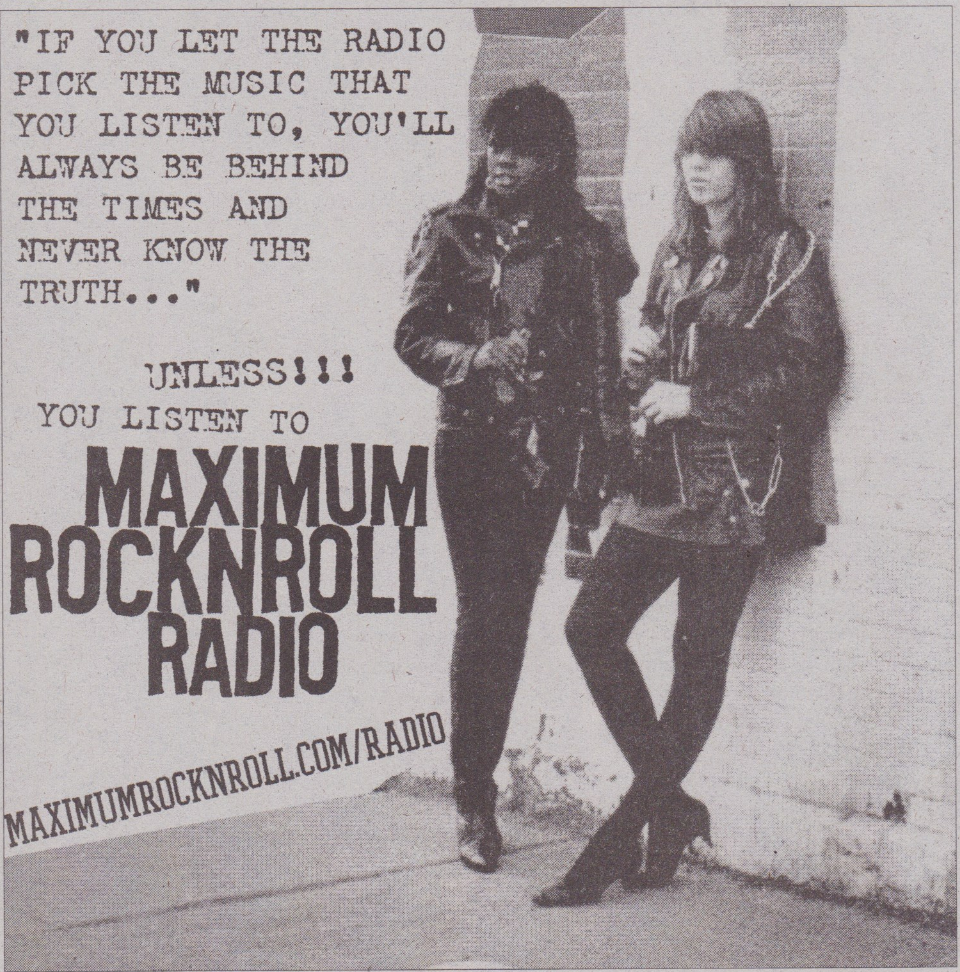
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# MOVIES

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

We are always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area let us know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. We will go see it.

## I CAN'T GIVE EVERYTHING AWAY

I am sure it seemed like a cute idea to start the documentary **XTC: This Is Pop** with singer / guitarist Andy Partridge complaining that he doesn't like rockumentaries. He even gripes that "they always have that lugubrious keyboard player from that prog rock group…" before showing Yes's Rick Wakeman saying he remembers XTC. Wakeman is one of my favorite punk documentary clichés as well. While it is convenient to place all of punk's hatred toward the music industry on that one guy's mountain of keyboards, it also reveals that Partridge is very familiar with rockumentaries and still he has agreed to be in one.

Even with his jokey attitude toward the format, Partridge perceives his place in the music history as an important one and wants everyone to know about it. I don't begrudge him that. If you don't stand up for yourself, who will? Fortunately, the other members of XTC, all of whom are interviewed in **XTC: This Is Pop**, have a more humble approach to looking back at the band.

The most revealing aspect of **XTC: This Is Pop** is when Partridge opens up about what is usually referred to as his stage fright , which caused the band to stop touring. Here he admits it was his addiction to Valium, which he had been taking since he was twelve years old. In Los Angeles during a XTC tour, his wife decided he didn't need the pills and flushed all of them. Coming down off years of dependence without a plan wreaked havoc on his system and ruined shows. The band stopped touring and became a studio band.

The fact that XTC stopped touring in 1982 yet remained a successful band until 2006 is highly unusual. While Partridge felt not having to tour freed up the band to do more creative things in the studio, drummer Terry Chambers quit the band, thinking that if you don't go on tour, what was the point of being in a band. As band members left XTC, the event is portrayed as concurrent. There seems to be minimal drama in XTC. While I know that is not truthful, I will always agree you can leave some of the petty shit on the cutting room floor. **XTC: This Is Pop** leaves a lot of it there. (showtime.com)

I am sure even the most casual fans of David Bowie could give a concise history of his musical output in the '60s, '70s and '80s. How much do you know about the last years of his career? I knew almost nothing until I watched **David Bowie: The Last Five Years**. As the best documentaries are able, it inspired me to check out the last two albums Bowie made during that period, *The Next Day* and *Blackstar*.

Bowie died in 2016 of liver cancer. He shared the news of his illness with very few people. Instead, he set up clandestine recordings sessions, getting everyone to commit to total secrecy. In these sessions, Bowie revisits his musical history with fondness and self-reflection. He also tears down that legacy. He includes a skeletal Major Tom in one video, and the cover of *The Next Day* obscures his infamous visage.

Watching Bowie work and collaborate with unexpected people makes **David Bowie: The Last Five Years** such a fascinating documentary. Bowie is the kind of rock star every one of them should be. He finds people who are doing interesting things that he admires and works with them. That he has his own abundance of creativity makes the experience mutually satisfying. Bowie also tries new things. He had a desire to create a Broadway musical. It took him decades to make happen, but when he was finally able to do it, he did it. The musicians, producers, video people, artists and everyone else interviewed for **David Bowie: The Last Five Years** admire his collaborations. I admire that he pushed himself to new heights until the end. (hbo.com)

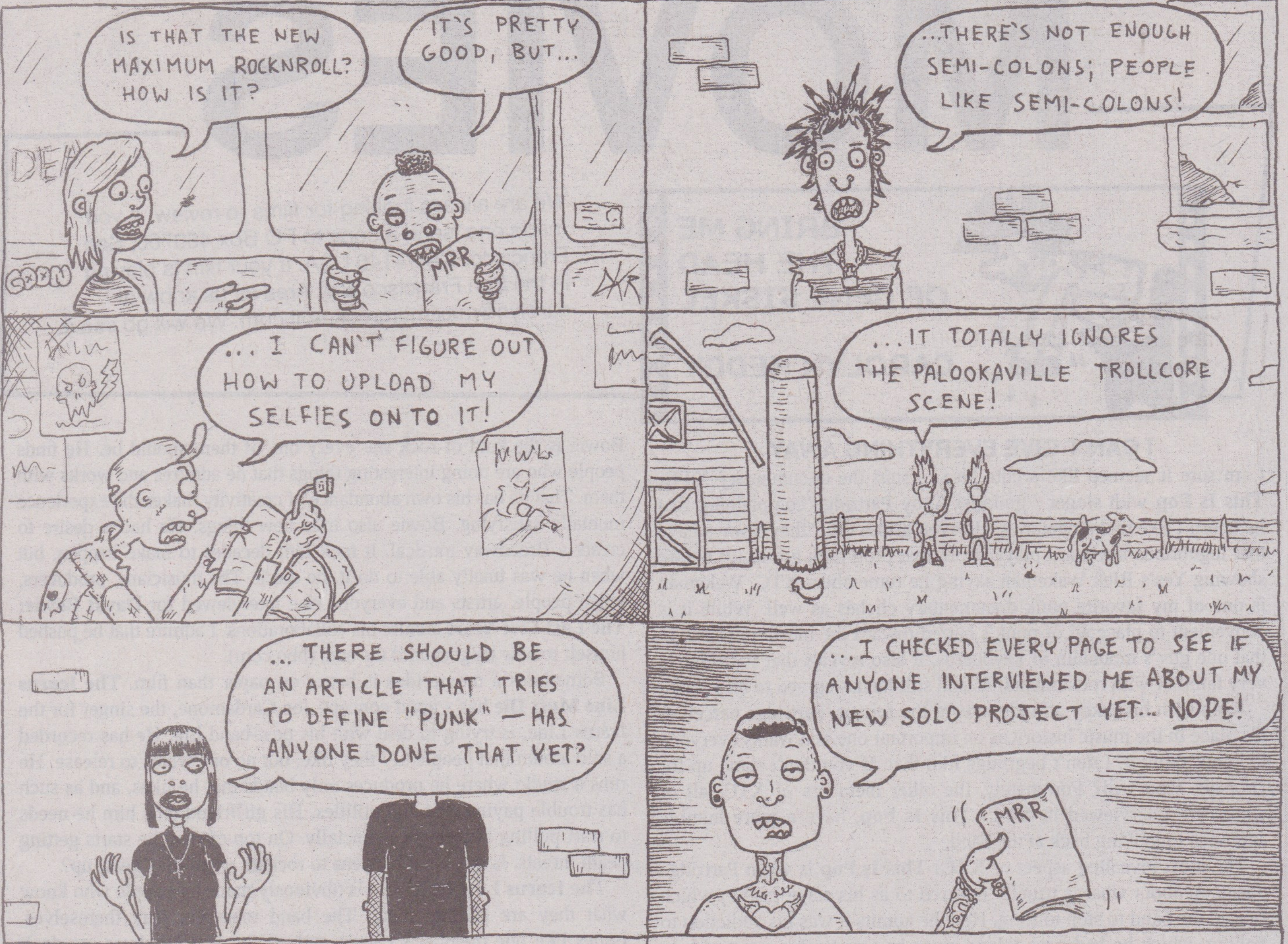
Sometimes a movie idea is better on paper than film. **The Icarus Line Must Die** has a good concept. Joe Cardamone, the singer for the Icarus Line, is trying to deal with his post-band life. He has recorded a solo album that people say they like, but no one wants to release. He runs a studio where he produces only bands that he likes, and as such has trouble paying rent and utilities. His girlfriend tells him he needs to start pulling his weight financially. On top of that, he starts getting death threats. Is this what happens to rockers when they grow up?

**The Icarus Line Must Die** is obviously made by people who know what they are talking about. The band members play themselves. Issues like one member's cancer and another's drug abuse are dealt with honestly and bluntly. There is the temptation for Cardamone to forgo his solo career and get the band back together. When you need the money, it seems like an easier route. Ironically, Cardamone is seen throughout the film driving around town in a Cadillac. He can't sell that, though. He lives in Los Angeles. What would he drive? (facebook.com/theicaruslinemustdie)

I love the library. I use it all the time. Even still, I was wondering if I would be able to endure **Ex Libris: New York Public Library**, a three hour-and-seventeen minute documentary about the New York Public Library. Director Frederick Wiseman takes a fly-on-the-wall perspective. The camera moves from room to room, building to building, listening in on meetings, watching people read or check their phones, hearing discussions and book readings or catching people snoozing. People are learning, questioning, plotting and sharing.

Like all public institutions, the New York Public Library has its issues. There is always a lack of money. The staff meets to discuss how to raise the necessary money to keep all the programs going. There are also the challenges for the library in the digital age. The lack of books present in **Ex Libris: New York Public Library** is telling. The library staff are involved in a project to get everyone in the city in internet access. There is also the difference between the main majestic library building and the smaller neighborhood branches.

**Ex Libris: New York Public Library** does not offer suggestions for how the library can maintain its stature and importance in New York City. It simply serves as visual appreciation for the institution. Most people do not experience everything the library has to offer, but here is the reason why you should linger for a bit longer. (zipporah.com/films/46)

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# RECORDS

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(RL) Ray Lujan
(RO) Rotten Ron Ready
(WN) Robert Collins

**AARGH FUCK KILL – "Sick to Death" EP**

Astoundingly stupid band name aside, Germany's AARGH FUCK KILL (hereafter AFK because I'm not typing that dumb shit out more than twice) offer up solid mid-tempo D-beat with some pleasing nods to old-school German masters like SCAPEGOATS and MANIACS (and a cheeky split-second of stolen DISCHARGE riff) alongside more modern touches. "Ruled by the Insane" is the standout of the four tracks, adding some interesting sampling and noise manipulation to the mix. AFK aren't the hottest thing going by any means, but the tunes are solid and the band have mostly avoided the pitfalls that many contemporary D-beat bands get mired in (too much reverb, excessive reliance on the DISCHARGE songwriting formula, etc.). (AU)
(Sengaja)

**ACID TEETH – "Panic Room / All About Me"**

On this EP, Seattle's ACID TEETH show that you don't need much to be great. This band combines '90s punk rock with post-hardcore and creates their own noise that is both unique and familiar at the same time. Think WESTERN ADDICTION. Clean recording and pissed off attitudes—I love it. With only one song on each side, I'm left wanting more. (DB)
(Snatchee)

**AMERICAN BREAKFAST – "Ass Cube" EP**

This here's a slice of raw, rollickin', garage rock'n'roll. We kick off with "Ass Cube," a driving, repetitive number sounding like a BILLY CHILDISH outtake but with a singer that sounds like NICO trying to front the SONICS. "Ice Cream" is up next, with a '60s-influenced sound and one swinging bass line. After the wild party on side A, the flip is a bit of a let down—a longer, slower VELVETS-esque ballad, but at least it lets AMERICAN BREAKFAST show off their sensitive side. Lots to love on this platter. Simple, direct, not trying to hard, and great vocals to boot. (AM)
(Randy)

**ANOMALIA / BAD JESUS EXPERIENCE – split EP**

Killer hardcore punk with an addictive swing from BAD JESUS EXPERIENCE. Finnish vocals suit the music perfectly and add some teeth to that groove, and I really enjoy their three tracks. Rawer, less nuanced D-beat-ish punk on the flip, with ANOMALIA emphasizing intent over delivery. It's fine, but sounds like a rough demo compared to their split mates. (WN)
(self-released)

**ANTIMOB / ΧΩΡΙΣ ΟΊΚΤΟ – split EP**

ANTIMOB are sounding as almighty as ever in their triumphant return to vinyl since their smash hit LP from 2012. One rampaging track leads into the other without a second to breathe. Desperate, loud, and unrelenting, and similar intensity to Japanese bands like CRUDE or DEATH SIDE, complete with plumes of melodic guitar shredding. A reminder that one of the world's most ferocious hardcore bands still resides in Greece. On the flip, ΧΩΡΙΣ ΟΊΚΤΟ (WITHOUT MERCY) opens with a vigorous dirge, equal parts thuggish east coast hardcore and '90s Greek crust, followed by a speedy *Kings of Punk*-esque track. Stellar offering from both Athens bands. (MA)
(Εξωτικός Παροξυσμός)

**APATIA – "Duma i Pycha: Koncert Robrege '90" LP**

APATIA was a hardcore punk band from Poznan, Poland that started in the late '80s. This LP was originally released as a tape of a live set from the Robrege Festival in 1990. Several of APATIA's first releases were on cassette, so it is cool to see some of their recordings get the vinyl treatment. APATIA plays hardcore punk that is often fast and often mid-tempo. At times, the speed and ferocity bring bands such as NEGAZIONE, ABADDON, or IMPACT to mind. APATIA does not only stick to the element of speed, though—any of the songs also incorporate mid-tempo parts influenced by late-'80s crossover. These moments are then thrown off by melodic guitar leads which offer an interesting and sometimes jarring transition. Some of the guitar work feels reminiscent of the more melodic side of Dischord hardcore such as DAG NASTY or GRAY MATTER. APATIA's brand of hardcore definitely isn't formulaic, and there is a lot of different and interesting things going on. One moment may be breakneck hardcore speed while the next may be some off-time rhythm with a finger-picked melodic guitar lead. If you like your hardcore interesting and / or you appreciate '80s Polish hardcore punk, this record may be for you. (BP)
(Refuse)

**ASYLUM – "Modern Hysteria" LP**

Downtuned, driving crust that feels like an updated Profane Existence sound. Plenty of flashy solos and the occasional flanger add extra-satisfying flair. The first half is fairly straightforward and does tend to blur after a while, but there is definitely a pickup in songwriting caliber and intensity starting with "Led to the Slaughter." I'm sure necks hurt after this band plays. (DG)
(Vinyl Conflict)

**AUSMUTEANTS / PUFF – split EP**

I think of Australia's AUSMUTEANTS as a world-class band, creative and talented. I think of Germany's PUFF (when I do, which is not frequently) as some pretty unremarkable synth fans. This split isn't doing much to change my mind. The two AUSMUTEANTS tracks are catchy and effortlessly intense punk songs, driven by the rhythm section, with guitar and synth acting as accents. PUFF's contributions aren't bad—they're totally fine synths-and-shouting tracks—but they don't really compare to the AUSMUTEANTS side. But hey, a couple of stellar songs and a couple of decent songs still averages out to pretty good! (MF)
(Aarght!)

**AUTOGRAMM – "Jessica Don't Like Rock'n'roll / Walk Don't Talk to Me"**

Snappy little numbers is right. This has got a very CARS-like new wave and rock'n'roll feel to it. Catchy and melodic and mid-tempo and nicely produced, without being over-produced. These guys are definitely serious about what they do. (KK)
(Party Product / Snappy Little Numbers)

**BAD NERVE – "The Lost Ones" LP**

This band brings to mind the melodic yet primitive side of early '80s Midwestern or Northern California hardcore, albeit with a modern but not too polished sound and recording. Two vocalists trade off and share duties, and every song on here has sky-high energy. The quality riffs and songwriting make this record worthy of repeat listens. (DG)
(Necros)

**BEEKEEPER – "Slaves To The Nothing" CD**

Driving heavy speed metal trio. Occasional technical diversions and throat-searing female vocals reminiscent of DETESTATION-era Saira accented by (occasional) falsetto shrieks. Fans of heavy fuckin' metal will be pleased; this one fires on all cylinders. (WN)
(self-released)

**BETA BOYS – "Brick Walls / Littered Streets"**

Two songs that rely way more on atmosphere than they do hooks. The A-side is an atmospheric CRAMPS crawl fed through one hundred chorus pedals. Olympia's CHRISTIAN DEATH they ain't. The B-side is a pogo punk number that aims for moody hardcore greatness, but the effects-laden instrumentation dilutes its impact. Backing music for sneaking clove cigs behind your high school. (JD)
(Total Punk)

**BETON - "Discography" CD**

Collection of essentials from this long-running Slovakian metalcrust outfit. Always hard charging, BETON inject powerful metal guitar leads, a double kick assault that only drops when appropriate and guttural death metal vocals into a sound that breathes life into a too-often-stagnant genre. There's a ruthless fire that owes equally to Swedish death metal and powerful stadium crust and has serious teeth. At more than 20 tracks culled from a couple of CD releases and splits with BESTOVEN and SKELETON, this is gonna take up more than 70 minutes of your time, but it's time well spent. I fuckin' miss crust. (WN)
(Mundo En Kaos)

**BIG BILL – "Stand By Your Bill" LP**

This is the debut album by Austin's BIG BILL. When I was in Austin earlier this week. BIG BILL is all they were talking about. (That's actually not true, but it should be.) If you're into music that is both good and goofy, look no further. With song titles like "What Do You Want on Your Salad" and "Clint Eastwood Is My Dad," they've got goofy covered. Musically, it's kind of all over the board. It's got some Americana going on. It's funky. It's punk. Some of the songs are faster paced. Others are fairly slow. You're going to have a tough time labeling this one. I can tell you that it's worth looking for. (KK)
(First Humans)

**BLACK ADIDAS – LP**

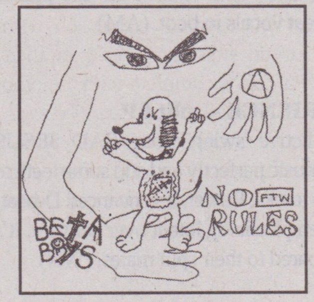
BLACK ADIDAS rides the line between upbeat, energetic rock and mid-tempo, pseudo-sensitive bar rock with extra instrumentation like organs, horns and synthesizers. The vocalist sounds like a cross between Mike Ness (SOCIAL DISTORTION) and Richard Butler (PSYCHEDELIC FURS). The band also comes off sometimes as sounding like later period SOCIAL D and even the POGUES. Sounds like hanging out in the bar with your mates while talking about drugs and your shitty ass life. (GH)
(Digital Analog)

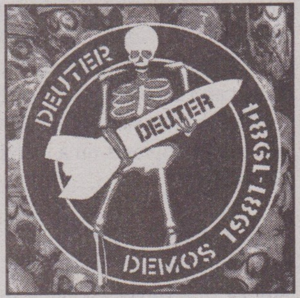
**BOW & SPEAR – "Bad at Fun" LP**

This record sits just on the edge of grunge, and possibly somewhere between slacker indie rock like DINOSAUR JR and arty hardcore like UNWOUND. The sound is generally a sort of mid-tempo, blown out guitar thing with sung vocals that really stick that '90s grunge influence right in your face. The biggest problem with the record is the lack of dynamics in the recording. The songs sound like they have a quiet part and a loud part, but in reality, it is just always loud. Sure, that's good for some styles of music, but not this. Especially in the mid-tempo, more radio friendly sounding stuff. That's why it's not just because we are a punk magazine that I say their heavier, faster songs are the better ones. Take "Empathic Knots," which manages to perfectly put together a very '90s post-hardcore verse with a catchy chorus that is reminiscent of MILK MUSIC. More like that, please. (PA)
(What's for Breakfast?)

**THE CHARLEY FEW – "Teufelshunde" LP**

Philly's premier punters of fine streetrock are back and just in time for a Super Bowl victory over the Trump lovers. The catchy anthems of unity are front and center more than ever with this release. *"D-beat, street punk all day / Bicycles, skateboards all ways / West Philly, South Philly who plays / Our scene is Hostile City"* kicks it off on "Back On The Streets" as you lace up your Gripfast as instructed, There is *no* let up to this ultra positive boot party. You'll want to sell everything and move to Philly after hearing *"When there's no one at your side / And*






*all the mouths are spewing lies / When word is bond but just to you / Now you're with the Charley Few"* from "Bounce Back" knowing these boys will one hundred percent have your back. With lyrics like "*I never gave up on Oi! / Oi! never gave up on me / Always knew it'd see us though / Life's adversity*" (from "Never Gave Up") you'll know you're truly home. Extra Whiz on my steak please! (RO)
(This Fucking City)

**CHILLER – "Hand of an Avaricious and Thoughtless Man" LP**
From what I understand, CHILLER is another amalgamation of FERAL TRASH. Moncton punks CHILLER tear through eight highly melodic, mid-tempo, unpretentious pop / alt punk songs with nary a breath. If you like the STOPS, you'll probably dig this. (CR)
(Dirtcult / Rock$tar)

**CITY LIMITS – "To Hull And Back" LP**
If you're a '70s power pop aficionado or an Anglophile, you may already be aware of Leeds-based CITY LIMITS and their rare as hens' teeth *Morse-Code Messages* EP from 1979. Turns out they recorded a full album's worth of material way back in 1979–1980, just now seeing the light of day on UK-based obscure reissue kings of the moment Queen Mum. CITY LIMITS were definitely on the poppy side of the DIY spectrum, with a sometimes soulful feel *à la* the JAM or DEXYS. Apparently Roland Gift of AKRYLKZ / FINE YOUNG CANNIBALS cites them as an early influence, and you can hear it. Lots of infectious stuff to digest here if you're running out of *Teenage Treats*, even a few that outshine the original EP (all three tracks of which are included here). Can't wait to see what Queen Mum comes up with next! (GB)
(Queen Mum)

**COLD LEATHER – "Past Remedy" EP**
Sounds like the ESTRANGED mixed with JOY DIVISION maybe, but with some late 2000-era melodic charge (see MASSHYSTHERI or something similar) in the mix. Derivative but very well played. You want your punk with a healthy dose of cold wave? This delivers in spades. You want anything other than that? Well, then it might behoove you to look elsewhere. (P$)
(Sabotage)

**DEAD HERO – "La Vida Continua" LP**
The Bogotá punks are at it again! I'm very excited about all the new punk coming out of Bogotá, Colombia, and the Rat Trap collective. DEAD HERO is one of these bands. Their new LP carries on with their catchy, melodic, Oi!-influenced sound first showcased in their enjoyable split with SECTA. *La Vida Continua* is complete with melodic guitar work (*à la* BLITZ or COCKNEY REJECTS), gang vocals, and mid-tempo songs to get you dancing. Both the melodies created by the guitar work and singer Paula's vocals are so damn catchy. If the opening notes of "New Age" get your blood going every time, check out this record! (BP)
(Sabotage)

**DEE CRACKS & NIKKI CORVETTE – "They Don't Know / 7 Days a Week"**
You see the name NIKKI CORVETTE and you get excited and sort of anxious at the same time. Is this going to be worthy? Or is it going to be cringe-worthy? Turns out the A-side is an awesome cover of KRISTY MACCOLL's classic "hit" from the late '70s. I'm not sure where NIKKI is on the B-side, but it's a catchy little pop number that will have you tapping your toes and bouncing your head. They sound just awesome. Good shit. Excellent shit. (KK)
(Eccentric Pop)

**DELETÄR – "Six Pieds Sous Terre" EP**
The debut from this French (not Swedish as the band name may imply) act features five competent (if unoriginal) D-beat numbers. The impact here is weakened somewhat by an under-distorted guitar tone and vocals that are both monotonous and a bit distant in the mix. Not bad for a band's first release, but also not enough to stand out from the hundreds upon hundreds of bands playing D-beat. (JD)
(Flower of Carnage / Kick Rock)

**DEUTER – "Demos 1981–1984" LP**
I've been wishing for this ever since being hooked on the DEUTER track featured on *Victim of Safety Pin* compilation (still probably my favorite track). I had since bought their lone LP from 1987 and was kind of let down, as it was more polished and less punk-sounding. This LP includes the aforementioned comp track as well as a stockpile of similar sharp, bouncy and youthful energetic punk like other Polish bands from the '80s (namely DEZERTER and TZN XENNA). The Crass-referential cover layout doesn't actually do the inner layout justice. It's chock full of original tape-layout material on a foldout poster format, as well as *two* booklets, one of which contains photos and English translations. "The band was created in 1980 in Warsaw... We are not interested in a swindle, rivalry or commercialism. We think that it doesn't help the human relationships. It puts people against each other. We want to have full contact with people." This one's a must for Polish punk fans. (MA)
(Warsaw Pact)

**DISGRACEFUL – LP**
Hard-hitting, driving D-beat out of London. A pretty by-the-books, EXTREME NOISE TERROR styled, bleak, crust ripper LP. My one issue is that some of these guitar solos are way too MÖTLEY CRÜE to be on a record with that many mournful skulls printed on it. That being said, this is a pretty decent record. Hair teasing crusties take note! (BA)
(Favela)

**ENAMORADOS – "La Verdad" 12"**
Damn this is good. Tough-ass, streetwise, power poppin' '79 punk from Barcelona. What, you say? It's like the difference between the ZEROS and the KNACK, or the HEARTBREAKERS and the QUICK. All those bands are present in spades here along with the PLUGZ, the VICIOUS, and KAKA DE LUXE. Made up of folk from many bands

you would know, but I'm not going to bore you. "La Misma Piel" will make you cry and "Rompe Mi Interior" will have you bomp-bop-bopping as you walk down a filthy dark alley on a hot summer's day. I really can't say enough about this record. It's the pop record of the year, not like that's a hard thing. It's what I want to hear as I curl up with a nice bag of solvents on a picturesque Catalonia beach. *Ahhh.* (RO)
(Sabotage)

**EXPLOATÖR – 12"**
While I haven't been able to confirm via (scarce) liner notes or internet, the singer certainly must be Poffen from TOTALITÄR. That being said, this sounds *a lot* like them (and a bit of MEANWHILE) in the songwriting, just with muddier guitars. So yeah, it's good. I could go on about the nuances that differentiate this from every other TOTALITÄR-like and related project, but diehards will already track this down and pinpoint the nuances on their own, and everyone else doesn't care. Kinda feels like last LP era TOTALITÄR throw away tracks, but still better than most D-beat / käng / whatever out there. (MA)
(D-takt & Råpunk)

**FLQ – "War Measures" LP**
FLQ is ex-SCHOOL JERKS, but apart from the vocals, the two bands don't sound that alike: FLQ plays mid-tempo (or even slower) tunes with more of a post-punk influence. I like it quite a bit. The vocals sound more like they belong over a hardcore band, and that contrast keeps it interesting for me. I prefer the band when they play with unexpected rhythms and everything gets a little weirder, like on the final track, "Tied Up." I do wish the mix had a little more low end, because I think the rhythm section are the unsung heroes here, but overall a very enjoyable record! (MF)
(Bad Vibrations)

**FÖRGIFTAD – "Bränd Generation" EP**
After looking over the sleeve and insert, my immediate thought was "this better be fuckin' good!" Fortunately, it mostly is. So this is a concept EP that joins the worlds of D-beat hardcore punk and old-school video gaming, complete with 8-bit pixel art, a cover that recalls the old hand-drawn video game boxes and a hilarious blatant rip of the '80s Nintendo logo. Since I don't speak Swedish, I can't exactly how the lyrics tie in to the concept. The music ranges from aggressive, metal-tinged D-beat *à la* later DISFEAR to some really great melodic punk in the style of ASTA KASK or even EBBA GRÖN. If you can imagine a punk take on AT THE GATES' *Slaughter of the Soul* you'd be on the right track. The theme goes full-circle when the record closes with an 8-bit cover of "Mannen Med Det Gyllene Haret" off the band's 2016 *Skit Ska Skit Ha* LP that fucking goddamn rules. I can only assume that some of you stopped reading at "old-school video gaming" and rushed to the mailbox with a cash-stuffed envelope. For the rest of you, I can confidently say that this is a strong recommend even without the last track, but fuck if it isn't worth it just for that. Excellent. (AU)
(Phobia)

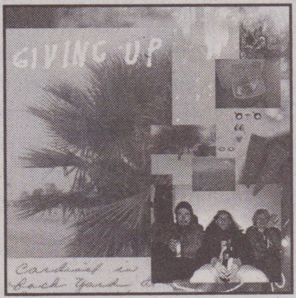
**FUCK IT I QUIT – "In the Shadow of Extinction" EP**
Holy shit, I thought the vocals sounded familiar but it wasn't until I looked up the band that I found out that it features the singer of ENSIGN! Well hell, this is not at all NJ HXC, that's for sure. The closest reference point is DROPDEAD, both in the the speed and the short track lengths, but my first thought on being assaulted by the opening tracks was "holy fuck, this sounds like HEALTH HAZARD," a comparison very few bands can garner. Everything about this EP is on point, from the Crass Records-styled art to the music to the excellent political lyrics that come housed in a thick and well-designed booklet. This is fucking great. I'd love to see them live, and I hope their next record lives up to this monster. (AU)
(Refuse)

**THE GALA – "Touch Me / Control"**
From somewhere over on that eastern seaboard, the GALA offers a saccharine rebranding of '60s teen schmaltz. The sheen is strong enough to get me thinkin' it's all made-for-TV. "Touch Me" is hip-hugger garage retread, fairly innocuous but forgettable all the same. "Control" is longer and more dynamic, recalling JOSIE COTTON and goddamn JACKSON BROWNE in equal measure. Could any punk's bloodlust be sated by this sort of adult-contempo fuckery? Nay! (MC)
(Hi Fi Hepcat)

**GANGRENA SURF – "Quemar - Hundirse - Profanar - Refractar" CD**
GANGRENA SURF is from Chile and play surf music on this CD, originally released in 2014. It is not the average straight-up, by the books surf music—there is something sinister sounding about this. All the songs sound like peppy versions of a B-movie villain's lair theme. The production is rough and dirty, but the playing is top notch. GANGRENA SURF stands out from other bands playing surf. Very cool. (CK)
(Cisterna Bizarra)

**GIVING UP – "Garner Cardinals" LP**
I'm not feeling the passion that emanates from older GIVING UP releases on this new LP. It was actually fairly hard to listen to, because it felt like the joy of experimentation was gone and the band had become complacent or even bored. It almost felt like they were just making this album ironically to pass some time. "People's Records," the closing track, was particularly difficult to not skip. Hopefully this is just a slump and we'll see a triumphant return or attempt at something new in the future. Definitely check out this band's whole output if you like DEFIANCE, OHIO or GHOST MICE, though, as you'll find a similar DIY smell here. (RH)
(Sophomore Lounge)

**GOVERNESS – LP**
Originally issued on tape by the DC-centric all killer no filler Sister Polygon label in 2016, here is the vinyl edition on another cool feminist record label from the east coast. It has an otherworldly feeling, spacey / spooky sounds made by three women that have a Too Pure records



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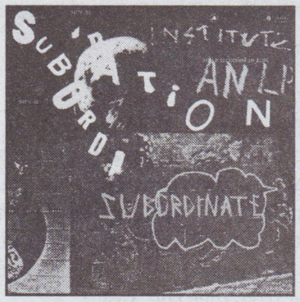
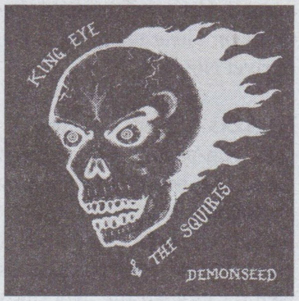







circa-1993 feeling to these ears...Their music is dreamy and dark, like TANYA DONELLY bands but with more of a basement grrrl sound aesthetic. The lyrics are radical and poetic, making me think of both SLEATER KINNEY and THROWING MUSES. In short, if time travel were possible then yes, I can imagine GOVERNESS getting a write up in *Sassy* magazine! It's the way the women's vocals crash and combine too. The guitar sound has the dream / dirge of a certain subset of early '90s underground bands, but I like the songs that also have a sort of Brill Building girl group feeling in the song construction, like "Daytime" and "Zipless." I think if you dig Carrie / Corin music and are also a sucker for LUSH this will be right up your alley! (LG)
(Radical Empathy)

**GREEN DREAMS – "Hear At Castle Makeout" LP**
Heavy on the '90s grunge alt tilt, think HOLE mixed with BREEDERS on speed, with a tiny bit-o-psych, and even some metal? Unexpected change-ups and warped soundbites make *Hear At Castle Makeout* a trippy ride. What's most notable about this LP is that I never knew where they were going with it or why. GREEN DREAMS has me scratching and nodding my head to their weird gritty grunge punk. (CR)
(One Percent / Radical Empathy)

**THE GUESTS – "Red Scare" LP**
This record immediately gives off the sense of being an instant classic. The GUESTS channel the infectious synth-pop sensibilities of NEW ORDER and the self-reflective vulnerability of the CURE. *Red Scare* is the soundtrack to loving and losing amid a backdrop of late capitalism. It's a relief to finally have the chance to dance alone in the dark or cry in the driver's seat in an empty parking lot to a new wave record that doesn't carry the irreconcilable ethical stain imbued by people like Ian Curtis and Billy Idol. The beats are straightforward and consistent, impressively holding down the songs in a genre that often relies on drum machines. The jangly guitars and synth add nuance as well as irresistible hooks that will haunt you long after the DJ has packed up and gone home. (HB)
(Sabotage)

**HEAVY LIDS – "Final Days" LP**
There is a lot to like about the second record from this New Orleans band, but the thing I like the most is the menacing keyboard playing. It sounds really sinister and makes you grit your teeth. The songs build and build without seeming to reach their destination. The vocals are disaffected with a bored attitude. The album name and song titles such as "Anti-Social," "Creep Creep," "Into Your Mind," and "Lying In The Streets" paint the complete picture. Cool stuff. (CK)
(Blak Skul)

**HOOPER – No Monument LP**
HOOPER from Denver plays mid tempo and driving alternative rock with touches of indie and emo. Pretty poppy and mellow most of the time. Kinda HOT WATER MUSICish. If any of that sounds good to you, you might like this record. (DB)
(Snippy Little Numbers)

**INSTINTO – "Demonis" CD**
The cover looks just like an old HIS HERO IS GONE shirt. Very competently played but somewhat derivative HIS HERO IS GONE / TRAGEDY style jams—so derivative that I'd rather put on TRAGEDY. But with the amount of firepower and musical prowess the band has, if they could just latch onto something more unique to themselves it could actually be quite wonderful. (P$)
(Hysterical)

**INSTITUTE – "Subordination" LP**
From the galloping opening notes of this record, you can tell that *Subordination* is a major step up for INSTITUTE. Whereas many of their early releases include plodding tracks that rarely went anywhere, this LP consistently brims with disgust and purpose—not a dud in the bunch. There's no dramatic rehaul of their post-punk sound, but everything here is tighter, more propulsive, and overall more *interesting*. Brittle guitar lines serve as the perfect accompaniment to Mose Brown's screeds against the police, wealth, and racism, delivered with his typical semi-drunken slur. A monolithic record for these bleak end times, and the best INSTITUTE release since *Giddy Boys*. (JD)
(Sacred Bones)

**JETZ – "Cracked Up" LP**
So the JETZ were a band in the '70s, but they never put out an album. In 2011, they put together an anthology. That led to a couple of shows. Then that led to the dudes thinking they should get the band back together and record an album. The songs are solid and catchy and well-played. They also have a lack of urgency that comes with guys getting a band together 35+ years after they originally formed with the mission of putting out an album of new songs. Essentially, you've got a collection of pleasant pop songs performed by guys that were in a band together 30 or so years ago. I know that sounds harsh, but it wasn't meant to. They really are pleasant pop songs. (KK)
(Queen Mum)

**JOHNNY TERRIEN AND THE BAD LIEUTENANTS – LP**
A handful of dudes made a RAMONES-core style album. It's fine. The songs are well-structured, the instrumentation is done well, and the production is good. Nothing screams out at you to pay attention to it, though. If you're in the SCREECHING WEASEL / QUEERS crowd, this is for you. If you're everyone else, there's nothing for you here. (RH)
(Speed City)

**KING EYE & THE SQUIRTS – "Demonseed" LP**
"Garage rock from Milwaukee" is how the enclosed letter describes this greasy platter, but I'd have to argue this is much more than such a bland statement. The wonderfully dreary dragging pop numbers (so much so that I had to check the speed several times) that highlight this record give it tinges of the WIPERS, BEACH BOYS, and EVERLY BROTHERS thrown in with the usual garage yahoos such as KING KHAN or GREG CARTWRIGHT. I'd rather do without the BEATLES references of "You're Not The Walrus" (aren't they all dead?), but that's

a small criticism for such a good pop record, and those are some words you won't hear me use together again. I promise. (RO)
(Drivel Novelties)

**KLAZO – "Embarrassed Of Living"**

A two-piece lager-aerobics outfit from some Canadian garage. KLAZO's hearts and minds are clearly in the right place: no frills pounding, suitably primal sonics, complete with a homage cover of the NUBS. The only real demerit here is that I feel like I've reviewed this record every month for the last eight or so years, which doesn't bode well for its shelf life. Not shitty, but far from thee shit. (MC)
(It's Trash!)

**KOENIGSTEIN YOUTH – CD**

A beautiful blur of frenzied, blazing hardcore with a metallic feel complete with crunchy guitar and occasional technical guitar leads. This is not slow for even a second, though the breakdowns are abundant and fist-clenching. There's just enough melodic sensibility to make these songs memorable, and if any of the ingredients here were out of balance, it would likely make for a cringey listen, but they absolutely nail it. I am no longer a youth, and wish I had half as much energy as this band, but at least I can enjoy their songs! (DG)
(Kick Rock)

**LANGUID – "Oblivion" EP**

Metallic D-beat fury! All the tracks on here benefit from the almost blown out production, with fierce and gritty distortion covering the string instruments. The winner on this record is the title track—a mid-tempo mosher not too far off from "Protest and Survive" but played by a *way* more dynamic band. However, at least half of this EP suffers from being mid-tempo—D-beat needs *speed*. (JD)
(D-takt & Råpunk)

**LEFT CROSS – "Chaos Ascension" LP**

Right up my grim, mortar-torn alley. This band out of Richmond, Virginia delivers some absolutely devastating, war-crazed death metal. They sound like a battle-weathered tank slowly rolling over your meager skull while cranking BOLT THROWER at full blast. The sound of charred bones scattered everywhere, permanent darkness, and constant explosions in the distance. It's your grave; can you dig it? (BA)
(Vinyl Conflict)

**LIFE FUCKER – "Z" 12"**

LIFE FUCKER's previous records have been a bit spotty, with some great tracks and others that were tedious at best, but everything has come together for the band here, resulting in their best record by an order of magnitude. The vocals, which previously have been a bit lifeless, are completely on point here, and the band is on fucking fire. There aren't many fancy fills or crazy leads, but every player absolutely attacks their instrument, and you can hear and feel that aggression in the finished product. The drums sound fantastic, carrying the band along under pounding, sometimes hypnotic repetitive riffing that's one part early '80s hardcore and one part spaced-out UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE groove. The record loses a bit of momentum on the too-long album closer "No Sleep" (not every band has a successful dirge in them), but this is still pretty great and definitely a big step up for the band quality-wise. The graphic design is varied but high-quality throughout, always a plus in a world of boring genre-standard layouts. The included lyric sheet / poster is great. (AU)
(Static Age)

**MAAILMANLOPPU – "Harmaat Pilvet / Kelle Mä Laulan?"**

This is maybe the tenth(?) single from these prolific Finnish post-punkers and even though it's only two songs, it is excellent. Both songs are entirely energetic, propulsive, and filled with hooks, but "Kelle Mä Laulan?" might get the most spins from me. It's super catchy in a way that might get comparisons to RED DONS or even NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS. Melodic and tough. (GH)
(Teen Wolf)

**MALGOBIERNO – Molestar CD**

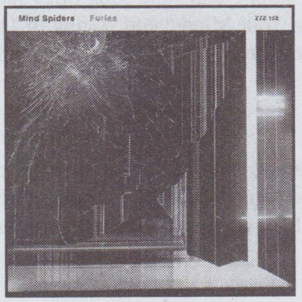
This Chilean band does a political hardcore punk style that fits well with other prominent (at least abroad) Latin American bands like DOÑA MALDAD and MIGRA VIOLENTA. This fourteen-song session is from 2004 and it seems that the band may not be active anymore, but this stuff holds up. It's a multimedia CD containing translations and videos. I don't know many Chilean bands, so this was a cool surprise. (MA)
(Maltida Cruz / Masa Punk / Polvora / Sarri-Sarri / Tercer Mundo)

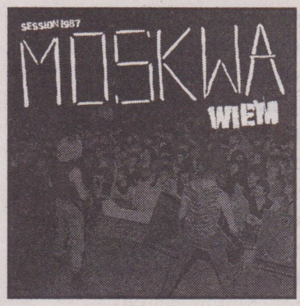
**MIND SPIDERS – "Furies" LP**

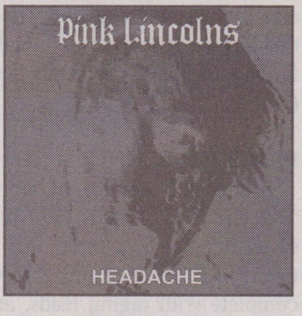
MIND SPIDERS is the project where Mark Ryan of MARKED MEN gets to indulge all his electronic impulses. It's punk rock analyzed, stripped to its elemental core, and synthesized by future machines trying to recreate the sound of 2000s Denton. Repetitious blips and bloops, static, and robotic vocals encourage comparison to DEVO, but this is more straightforward than their Ohio weirdness. The stark dystopian gloom of the title track fulfills the BLITZ meets TUBEWAY ARMY promise that Gary Numan failed to deliver on; at times the industrial drive reminds me of the (forgotten?) Al Jourgensen and Jello Biafra collaboration LARD. Peel away all these references, though, and it's clear that a masterful pop songwriter is once again at work. (AM)
(Dirtnap)

**MISILISKI – "Kioku No Kage" EP**

Tokyo, Japan's MISILISKI sounds a lot like the VICIOUS to me, which means it's tough, melodic and takes a lot of cues from *KBD* style punk. I don't say this to diminish their power because MISILISKI is awesome in their own right. Every song on here is super catchy, powerful, and tight as fuck. I would love to see this band live while pumping my fist and screaming along with them. Total pogo machine. (GH)
(D-takt & Råpunk)








**MODERN LOVE – "Tross Alt" LP**

My new favorite Norwegian band! Carrying on the LIFE...BUT HOW TO LIVE IT? tradition of non-traditional punk, MODERN LOVE have delivered a great LP spanning a number of styles, from post-punk to emo to melodic hardcore. All the songs are sung in Norwegian, but luckily the insert provides a translation into English. The members of this band have been stalwarts of the DIY scene for many years, and the experience shows in the solid work put in here. In the best moments, there are passages that sound like a mixture of LEATHERFACE and the WEDDING PRESENT; that's a sweet spot and there's little higher praise! Seriously great stuff: I hope to hear more, and I hope they find their way to the USA at some point! (AM)
(Refuse / Stonehenge)

**MOSKWA – "Wiem" EP**

I just can't stop playing this one! This band should be famous. I mean, maybe they kind of are in Poland, and anyone into international tape trading in the '80s was likely blown away by tracks from their ripping '86 demo...but these cuts are seriously some of the best punk I've heard from the region and era. Snarling and gnashing, while melodic and masterful. MOSKWA's aptitude for writing a catchy song peaks on this 1987 session. The melodic guitar / vocal line on "Wiem" makes it a pop hit, and it's been stuck in my head so much it feels like I've known it my whole life. "Ja" and "Słowo" are dually dark and triumphant, and "Słyszę" maintains MOSKWA's more aggressive style as heard on earlier material. So much better than their 1989 LP, which suffered from a heavily compressed and metallic production. (MA)
(Warsaw Pact)

**MYSTERI – "Ruiner" LP**

This ripping Swedish D-beat crust behemoth delivers a frothing example of epic style crustcore with uniquely high range guitar chords that sound almost like indie rock. A unique juxtaposition, this is a surprising addition to a generally all-downer style of punk. Moments of poetically articulated oration break up the long passages. Overall, a very melodic work with strong thundering crust and rolling D-beat songs. (JR)
(Phobia)

**NATIONS ON FIRE – "Strike the Match" LP**

This is a reissue of the first LP of the influential Belgian straightedge band NATIONS ON FIRE, which initially came out in 1991. This LP came out at an interesting time, when much of the '80s youth crew / positive hardcore was starting to wane, and in its place, different elements such as Krishna, veganism, hardline, and militancy began to show up in the straightedge hardcore scene. NATIONS ON FIRE stood out because they were known to be politically active among the punk and hardcore scene, straightedge or not, and as well, were staunchly pro-choice in an era of a bunch of terrible anti-abortion straightedge bands. This LP is still very influenced musically by youth crew-era hardcore bands such as YOUTH OF TODAY and UNIFORM CHOICE, but they also incorporate more melody in the vein of DAG NASTY and BATTERY. The songs are fast, pissed, and at times, melodic. The lyrical content is politically charged and a breath of fresh air from a lot of the shitty moralistic and socially conservative lyrics of some bands of the same era. The lyrics touch on such topics as religion, the police, patriarchy and racism. If you enjoy youth crew-era hardcore but also appreciate a more radical political message, check out this LP! (BP)
(Refuse)

**NOT AVAILABLE – "Grand Punks" CD**

This sextet have been doing their thing now for 25 years, since the '90s. And so far as I can tell, despite singing in impeccable English, they're German to boot. Which makes sense, I s'pose. The Europeans always make that NOFX / BAD RELIGION melodic hardcore stuff sound somehow still fresh and engaging—even when they do the ska bit. No idea as to their output over the last quarter century, but this effort still sounds good to me! It might just be my overactive imagination, but I wouldn't put it past them (since they have been around for a wee bit) to have spent some time listening to DIE WALTER ELF either. (RK)
(self-released)

**NOVEMBER ONOTO BAND – "Lo-Fi Trans-Rock Seven Inch Sampler" EP**

Both of these songs are pulled from previously released records, and as a team represent those records pretty well. "To the Kids in the Uniforms" is a fuzzy pop song that leans equally on the BUZZCOCKS and '90s pop-punk. "The Work & the Worry" is more of a droning shoegaze track with thudding drums, fuzzed out guitars, and fuzzed out vocals that are pushed way back in the mix. Maybe it's lo-fi because it was recorded on a portastudio, but it sounds surprisingly full and big and certainly good enough to make you want to check out the records. (PA)
(Taiyo)

**PEST CONTROL / RAPTUS DI FOLLIA – split 12"**

'80s Southern California meets classic US hardcore punk on the RAPTUS DI FOLLIA side of this split; catchy choruses and a frenetic pace that rarely even lets up for a mosh part. Guitar leads and melodies really make this one for me, and it's easy to see them well represented on the Patched Young Punk Masses. PEST CONTROL offer just three tracks on the flip, but quality bests quantity every time. Discordant emotional violence meets stadium crust with high vocals and no bass. They seem to draw everything out and it works for them. Puts you on (a knife) edge from the start, and never lets up. (WN)
(Dirt Fi / Incredible Noise)

**PINK LINCOLNS – "Headache" LP**

This 1989 re-release is solid from front to back and traverses the world of punk sounds. The first three tracks kick off with some solid, straightforward punk before it gets real weird with some chant-singing and grating audio samples on "Spank Your Kids." Soon, you're listening to a killer ELTON JOHN cover ("Saturday Night's Alright For Fighting"). It then chugs along like a speeding train on "Cotton Mather." After that, they slow it down a little for some vocal emphasis on "Yo-Yo Man" before it gets ska-tastic on "Homeboy." This release

also includes their 1986 demo at the end, which, while not as good as this album, is still a worthwhile listen and a great addition. If you're feeling nostalgic, check this out. It's aged very well. (RH)
(Not For Profit)

**PRICE OF SILENCE – "Architecture of Vice" 12"**
Featuring members of almost every great Swedish band of the '90s and '00s, PRICE OF SILENCE have emerged from an eternity of silence (well, a three year break anyway) to offer up four more tracks of *Price of Silence / The More I See*-era DISCHARGE worship complete with raging leads, anthemic riffing and occasional touches of hair-metal swagger. It's not as cheesy as *Grave New World*, but it's definitely not influenced by *Why?* either. DISCHARGE worship is a complicated and multi-faceted beast, and it is endlessly fascinating (to those who are interested) to examine the various approaches bands can take to it. Given the caliber of players on this recording, it goes without saying that it's fucking killer and a must-have for those who can hang with early metal-period DISCHARGE. Everyone else should find something to appreciate in this record because it's just that damn good. (AU)
(D-takt & Råpunk)

**PRIMITIVE LIFE – "Man Made Disaster" EP**
This Berlin straightedge band delivers six songs of rough-around-the-edges youth crew that audibly pours its heart and guts out. The songs are informed by but not tied to genre formula, and each is varied enough from the others to keep me interested. This band has exponentially more passion and desire for a better world than an entire room full of full-sleeved cool guys who own many thousands of dollars of YOUTH OF TODAY merchandise, but haven't ever actually taken a stand for shit in their entire stupid lives. I can just imagine them playing live and jumping around constantly. (DG)
(Backbite / Inges Revenge / Refuse)

**REPRESION 24 HORAS – "Suena A Silencio" EP**
Last month I reviewed a not-so-great CD and sarcastically kidded about the "vibrant Canary Islands punk scene." Now, in typical ghost of Tim Yo style, I am forced to have it slammed back in my face. This Gran Canaria band, while not my new favorite, play some fine speedy hardcore, reminding me of a much more polished modern SEDICION with their gruff, in-your-face vocals and primal pounding drums. Five songs to make me eat my words and get you slammin'. (RO)
(self-released)

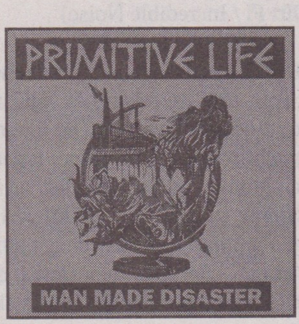
**RIDICULOUSES – "This Is a Punk Band" EP**
Sloppy, thrashy, kind of silly punk that gets pretty poppy. Eight songs, one 7". Multiple vocalists yelling and screaming make it sound a little hectic at times, but that is when it is best. Songwriting isn't exceptional, playing is fine, like if some folks got their '90s high school band back together to finally record that 7". (PA)
(Night Animal / Rad Girlfriend)

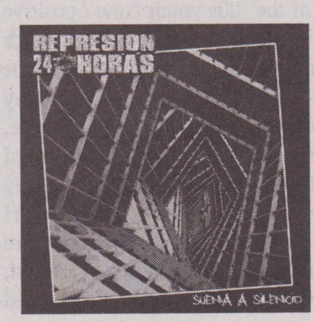
**RULER – "Tiger / Gimme Some Noise"**
Lemme break the news to you: RULER is a new and scorchingly hot-shit Japanese punk band boasting connections to the YOUNG ONES, INTIMATE FAGS, and the much-loved TEENGENERATE. Whereas lotsa their classmates have softened toward power pop, RULER gnashes severely, recalling hard-rock / punk hybrids like MUTANTS or LEFT HAND DRIVE, just totally overblown, rotten greatness. Real tuff and savage riffs (those of the irrepressible FINK variety), broken teeth, spilled booze, endless attitude, the whole enchilada. My reason to live in 2018. Highest possible recommendation! (MC)
(Mangrove / Secret Mission)

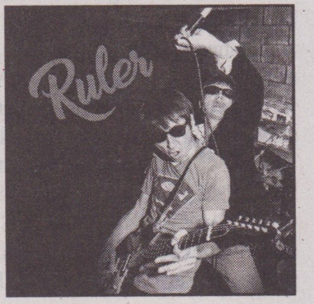
**SHARK TOYS – "Labyrinths" LP**
One of Los Angeles' coolest groups, SHARK TOYS have been around for nearly a decade, with a revolving cast of musicians and a sound that has mostly been rooted in the wild post-punk explorations of British surrealists like the SWELL MAPS and the FALL. This record finds a nearly entirely new line up and a more abrasive rambunctious sound that puts them in line with some of their other In The Red labelmates...I would almost call some of the music on this disc garage! In short going from making sounds that evoke *Messthetics*, to making sounds that evoke the city they live in, while retaining the bashed out sensibilities of UKDIY. This record sounds like Los Angeles to me, the darkness, the freedom, driving and creating in between freeway traffic and smog. There's a wild array of things to get into on this LP. (LG)
(In The Red)

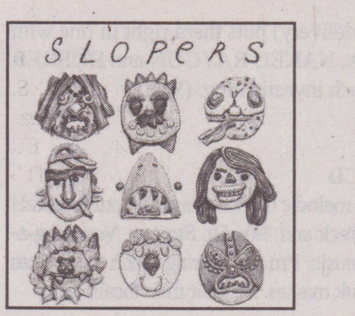
**SHOWER WITH GOATS – Just Another Day LP**
If you're into fast pop punk from the '90s, this is a gold mine. SHOWER WITH GOATS was a staple band in the New Jersey DIY pop punk scene, and *Just Another Day* is a classic pressed on vinyl for the first time since the original release back in 1997. If you wanna be technical, the first twelve songs are originally from the album, and the rest of the songs are from two 7"s that came out later. This is a really good album for punk rockers who like their music fast, simple, melodic, a little bit cheesy, and not overly produced. Some cool ska-punk parts for that nostalgic '90s feeling. For fans of bands like DILLINGER FOUR, CRIMPSHRINE, SCREECHING WEASEL, KRUPTED PEASENT FARMERZ, and the likes. (DB)
(Not For Profit)

**SIMPLY SAUCER – "Cyborgs Revisited" 2xLP**
Canada's SIMPLY SAUCER might not make the A-list for weirdo proto-punk bands of the mid-'70s, but they're certainly a group everyone with an interest in that era should be aware of. Some songs on *Cyborgs Revisited* sound like VELVET UNDERGROUND B-sides while others incorporate more psychedelic elements; "Bullet Proof Nothing," arguably the band's most famous track, perfectly integrates both aspects, but the other tracks aren't too far behind it. This recent reissue features a second disc consisting of bonus live material. It's certainly not as essential as the studio recordings, but it's a very nice bonus for fans to get to hear the band stretching out a little. It also





makes this one worth checking out even if you already have the *Cyborgs Revisited* single-LP reissue from a few years ago. (MF)
(In the Red)

**SIX BREW BANTHA – "Blight" LP**

Supersonic, thrashed-out grindcore mayhem out of Canada. This shit is so complicated and tight that I bet they know how to play jazz and shit. Fortunately for us, they just fucking grind! It's like tech-metal in the punkest way possible. These guys might not cross out their music symbols, but they still know how to fucking shred! (BA)
(To Live A Lie)

**SLOPERS – 10"**

This Chicago two-piece is made up of guitar and drums with both members sharing vocals, trading off self-loathing barbs and tales of not giving a flying fuck. The songs are bouncy, garage-y and fun, recalling BORED GAMES, the BANANAS and a less technical SPOKENEST. I can imagine that they are fun to split some beers with while dancing around in the basement, which is what this record sounds like. Good shit! (GH)
(Weirdly)

**SONGS FOR SNAKES – "Crystal Vapour Figure" LP**

San Francisco's SONGS FOR SNAKES deliver ten consistently catchy, thoughtful tracks that will unquestionably appeal to fans of melodic '90s punk and shoegazers alike. Their sound might be influenced as much by '90s grunge as by the pop punk canon, but they have an introspective wall-of-sound quality not unlike JAWBREAKER or RADON. The vocals are heavily multi-tracked and decked out in reverb, giving the entire record a slightly psychedelic, dreamy feeling despite the heaviness of the instruments. The songwriting is nothing less than meticulous, forging a path forward even among the weeds of such a well-trodden genre. (HB)
(Timid Crusher)

**SPELLS – "Big Boring Meeting" EP**

Very poppy, melodic, well-produced, and borderline goofy punk from Denver, CO. Multiple genders share the mic as the band tosses out major-chord, up-tempo rock songs with tambourines and lots of backing vocals. It sounds like a real fun, wholesome time for everyone. (GH)
(Snappy Little Numbers)

**SRIRACHACHAS – CD**

These are older dudes playing US punk circa 1986 with a humor bent. Maybe DEAD MILKMEN or ANGRY SAMOANS like. I didn't like this, but it doesn't really matter—I'm sure these guys are having fun doing their thing without trying to make it big. (RL)
(Girth)

**STORM OF SEDITION – "Decivilize" LP**

Diminutive chords with piercing bolts of psychotherapeutic guitars that flow forward with warm, depressing ooze. STORM OF SEDITION play blackened crust, emanating blood-curling harsh screams, pitch-shifting dark changes, and guttural vocals in the basin of a dense, pummeling punk record. Moments of clean black metal blasts and protocore breakdowns are laced up tightly in a hardcore punk boot to the face. Feverishly maniacal vocals throughout, effortlessly sinister abysmal maelstrom grooves. The drummer is a monster, and though I usually prefer grittier crust production, this cold and clear attack is outstanding. This sounds like a weird time between late '90s crust and its black metal crossover, while retaining a sincere, sharp punk edge. This record and its booklet contained reeks of anarchy. (JR)
(Profane Existence)

**S-21 – "Operation Menu" EP**

The final release from Philadelphia's finest is an artistic triumph. The three tracks here explode in rage against imperialism / colonialism and its aftermath with more devastating bluntness than your typical DISCHARGE-worship band. Each song builds on the same mid-tempo fury that they mastered on the *Year Zero* EP, but with even more directness and fury. You'll be stomping across the room to this record. Easy contender for one of the best EPs of the year. (JD)
(Slug Salt / World Gone Mad)

**SUSAN – "TV Girls" EP**

SUSAN is a poppy, peppy girl group from Los Angeles. Harmonizing vocals backed by minimal indie rock instrumentation. The first song, "TV Girls," has some good lyrics about the portrayal of women on television. There is a cover of VIOLENT FEMMES' "I Held Her In My Arms" on the B-side. (CK)
(Volar)

**SWAMP DONKEY – LP**

Four Australian boys calling themselves SWAMP DONKEY is rather lame, though any attempt at offensiveness is undermined by the sound of the music. Their label describes them as garage rock / grunge / shoegaze, which is appropriate. Swirly guitars with plodding drums banging out the rhythm, over which plaintive vocals are sung. Then the distortion kicks in and singing gets more intense. Some songs veer toward an '80s college rock sound. It's an interesting combination of styles that creates some catchy songs. (CK)
(Happy Wolves)

**THIS KIND OF PUNISHMENT – LP**

The self-titled debut from New Zealand's THIS KIND OF PUNISHMENT, one of two of the band's LPs recently reissued, was originally released in 1983 on the seminal Flying Nun imprint. OK, that description might be sufficient for certain folks to know already they'll want to seek this out—for good reason, as the label churned out such a string of interesting records in the '80s, it's almost unbelievable. To anyone else still reading, THIS KIND OF PUNISHMENT sprung from the excellent NOCTURNAL PROJECTIONS (perhaps familiar to some *MRR* readers from the *Bloodstains*-esque compilation *Hate Your Neighbours: 18 Blasts of Dumb NZ Punk Rock*), but left behind their predecessor's sharp, new wave-tinged sound in favor of a less

straightforward approach. Several of the tracks here come off like a deconstructed take on JOY DIVISION—melancholy vocals delivered in a distinctive baritone over minimalist riffs—with the band as likely to employ piano as they are guitar. Other pieces are looser and more experimental, although the thread of melody is never so deep under the surface as to be completely indiscernible. Overall, I wouldn't include this among the essential releases of the 1980s NZ underground, but nevertheless it stands on its own as a compelling work worth investigating. (CS)
(Superior Viaduct)

**TOPSY TURVY'S / USELESS ID – split EP**
USELESS ID has been one of my favorite Israeli punk rock bands for more than half of my life. Their side is so fucking good. The first song, "Unionway," is an angry, fast, and catchy song about Japanese hardcore bands, while the second song is an awesome cover of the SWINGIN' UTTERS' "Unpopular Again" done in a punk rock way instead of the original ska-punk version. The TOPSY TURVY'S side is also pretty good. Despite pumping out pop punk since 2008, I've never heard about this band before now. Their songs are pretty fun and reminded me of bands like RVIVR. (DB)
(Jerkoff / Ratgirl)

**THE TRASHIES – "The Octagon" LP**
Hazardous yet compelling DIY catshit from this semi-active, sometimes-loved poop troop. It's album number whatever from the TRASHIES, having long-since shed their earliest one-note trappings and progressed into non-traditional realms of punkiocity, as evidenced by this pretty ace collection of sound smears. Every side conveys a deceptively interesting, unpredictable slant on punk musics: in-joke tomfoolery, found-sound organics, twitch-instro buzz, gleeful murk, sexy mold, et fuckin' cetera. The non-tradish slow jam approximation "Fresh Hunny" takes the cake for me, other weirdos will disagree. Part of the beauty here, says I. Very pungent, very rewarding. (MC)
(Fine Concepts)

**TRIAL – "The Early Years" 2xLP**
The European obsession with '90s American hardcore rages on. Here, Refuse dutifully compiles all of Seattle-based sXe stalwarts TRIAL's early EPs in one clean package. Includes all tracks from their three 7" EPs, the 10", and their original 1995 demo, with a gigantic full color booklet with tour diaries and fliers from most of their 1996 and 1997 tours. Limited to 500 copies with a variety of colored vinyl options for any devoted sXe completist. (GB)
(Refuse)

**TRIAL BY FIRE – "1982" LP**
Unearthed Chicago hardcore circa 1982. I won't go into regurgitating the band history that I learned from the liner notes, but I'll say that here lies further evidence that the more you think you know all of the bands... the more bands there will always be to discover. Culled from a session for an LP that was still unfinished when the band split up, these tracks are shit hot and their songwriting (and delivery) puts them right in line with Midwest contemporaries like NOTA, NAKED RAYGUN and HÜSKER DÜ. Well put together, and well worth investigating. (WN)
(Alona's Dream)

**TU AMARGO MADRUGAR – CD**
These guys are from Chile and play melodic hardcore and pop punk. Vocals in Spanish. I'm hearing lots of Fat Wreck and '90s Dr. Strange. Very sing-a-long type choruses, but based on the music, I'm not hearing much that makes this stand out from the world's pop punk masses. Best for their locals. (RL)
(Buena Basara)

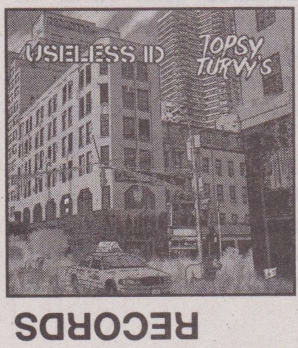
**TYPE – "Cyano / Zenipede"**
This has barely any online presence and no contact info, which of course makes one want to fall down the rabbit hole that's intimately familiar to inquiring minds. Who? From where? Devo...all right?! Contemporary new wave whose shroud of secrecy I'm down to let envelope me and keep me warm. (P$)
(self-released)

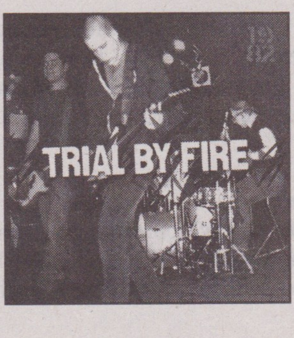
**VALERY MESS – "Granice Absurdu" CD**
Polish-language melodic hardcore / punk that has similar production values to the Fat Wreck roster. Gruff vocals and a lot of octave chord riffs. I can't find much that sets this apart from the pack. (GH)
(Lou & Rocked Boys / Punk Shop)

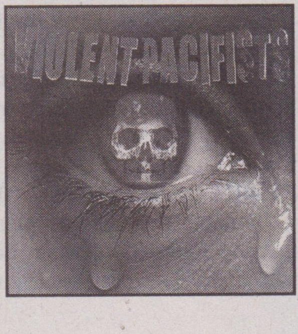
**VERY MENTAL – "Misconstrued / In the Morning"**
I just don't *get* this record. There are a lot of cool elements: familiar Stooges-style riffs (not a slight, I'm into it), male-female vocal interplay, classic rock guitar leads. But both songs feature strange, pop ballad-like choruses plopped into the middle of these otherwise rocking songs. It's baffling to me; I just don't understand the choice to put together the songs in this way. I don't hate this record, but it's not quite a winner to my ears. (MF)
(Total Punk)

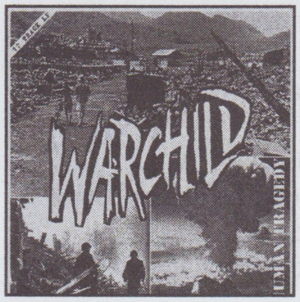
**VIBRATORS – "Past, Present, and Into The Future" CD**
The latest from this first-wave UK punk combo. This release mixes members of their early line up with their more recent members. Knox leads the show here with his LOU REED-style vocals on mid-tempo punk rock'n'roll tunes. Pete, their current bassist and live vocalist, picks up the pace on his songs. They mix in a couple of re-recordings of old songs at the end too. Although this suffers from a lack of cohesiveness at times with all the different musicians, this was an enjoyable listen for this long-time fan. (RL)
(Cleopatra)

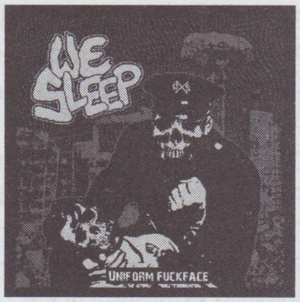
**VIOLENT PACIFISTS – "Freedom From Choice" EP**
Forty-four songs on a seven inch diameter pink and white swirled slab of wax. Blasts, blastbeats, moderately in-tune guitar (but you can only tell on the occasional slow intro). If this is your steez then you already know the drill: shit-fi noisecore grind. (WN)
(Everyday Madness Everyday)

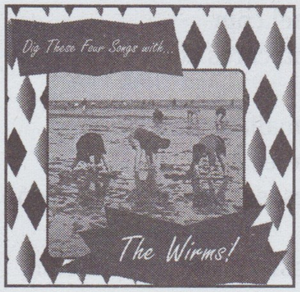


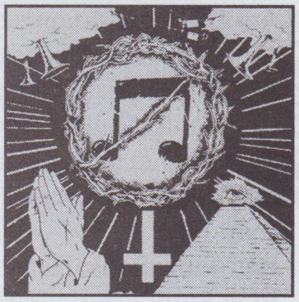




**WARCHILD – "HAUNTING IMAGES OF HUMAN TRAGEDY" LP**

The only D-beat band named after *Point Break*? High velocity rippers from Umeå that fit in perfectly with Sweden's well-known D-beat scene. While there's not much to set them apart from your typical D-beat act, there is a tightness to the band that is great, making this more intense than other releases. Not bad! (JD)
(D-takt & Råpunk)

**WE SLEEP – "Uniform Fuckface" EP**

Ruthless dual vocal German fastcore. Nothing delicate or deliberate here, these kids just wind up and turn themselves loose. Those nostalgic for Thrash2K need look no further—off the rails, heavy, pissed...and fast. Drummer from STACK, for those who like to remember things that were good. (WN)
(Flowerviolence / Sengaja)

**THE WIRMS – "These Four Songs With..." EP**

Whatever garage punk vibes they're serving me are too heavy on the garage rock and not heavy enough on the punk for my tastes. The SKREWDRIVER-style vocals lead to some cognitive dissonance and more than a few moments of confusion. Remember when the MIDNIGHT EVILS taught us all how to walk the line between punk and garage magnificently and seemingly effortlessly? I do. (P$)
(What's For Breakfast)

**V/A - O Começo Do Fim Do Mundo 2xLP**

In traditional Nada Nada fashion, we get a fully deluxe reissue of this classic Brazil hardcore punk compilation from '83. These tracks were recorded live at the first big (4,000 people!) punk festival in São Paulo, and the repress has a whole extra LP's worth of material from all the classic bands and then some: CÓLERA, JUÍZO FINAL, DOSE BRUTAL, INOCENTES, NEURÓTICOS, FOGO CRUZADOS, PSYKÓZE, DESERTORES, LIXOMANIA, HINO MORTAL, RATOS DE PORÃO, ESTADO DE COMA, PASSEATAS, ULSTER, SKISITAS, OLHO SECO...It's just a treasure trove of primitive and vicious Brazilian hardcore. Accompanying the discs are plenty of things to read, including the story of the fest (in English), repro of the handbill, poster, lovely printed inner sleeves, and incredible photo book. The original LP seems much more scarce than other early '80s Brazil comps like *SUB* and *Grito Suburbano* (we don't even have a copy here at *MRR*), but this reissue certainly more than fills the hole in anyone's collection or archive. A thing of beauty, made with passion and love. (MA)
(Nada Nada)

**V/A – "SCRAP!" LP**

Spectacular compilation of six ripping Japanese acts. I'll refrain from doing the full play-by-play thing, but I'll say that MIDDLE EDGE (exceptional dark driving punk with mind blowingly brilliant vocals), BLACK AND WHITE (their UK punk meets power pop should be familiar to those who know what's up) and LOUDMOUTH (blown out fiery garage punk) are my three faves, but DIALS, CAR CRASH and CENTIPEDE are more than reason enough to make a sure hard copy of this compilation lands in your hands. I'll pretty much bite on anything from Secret Mission or Mangrove—to see then teamed up for this release is all but a guarantee of certified banger status, and *SCRAP!* does not disappoint. (WN)
(Mangrove / Secret Mission)

**V/A – "To Live A Lie Volume III" EP**

Most punkers are probably familiar with the extremely prolific, mostly grind and powerviolence-focused To Live A Lie label. I know I am, and I was quite surprised to find that this EP featured six straight-up, mostly female-fronted hardcore bands. Featuring one track apiece from LOWHANGERS, CLAW, BODY PRESSURE, MEMORY LOSS, METER FEEDER, and OXIDANT, there isn't a dud in the bunch. METER FEEDER's raw recording and tough, Oi!-influenced face puncher of a track was an immediate favorite, followed by CLAW's straightforwardly aggressive, feedback-heavy approach that comes off like a much less shrill VOMIT PUNX. There aren't a ton of reasons to buy a compilation EP in 2018, but if you're one of the few left in that market you could do a hell of a lot worse than picking up this one. (AU)
(To Live A Lie)

# CONTACTS

**Aarght:** aarghtrecords.bigcartel.com
**Alona's Dream:** alonasdreamrecords.com, alona@alonasdreamrecords.com
**Anomalia:** acebook.com/anomaliamalmi
**Backbite:** tictail.com/backbiterecords
**Bad Jesus Experience:** badjesusexperience.bandcamp.com
**Bad Vibrations:** badvibrationsrecords.blogspot.com
**Blak Skul:** blakskulrecords.com
**Buena Basara**: facebook.com/Buena-Basara
**Chaos Rural:** chaosruralrecords.com
**Cisterna Bizarra:** cisternabizarra.bandcamp.com
**Cleopatra**:cleopatrarecords.com
**Digital Analog:** igitalanalogrecords.com
**Dirt Cult:** 7930 NE Prescott Street, Portland, OR, 97218, dirtcultrecords.wordpress.com, dirtcultrecords@gmail.com
**Dirtnap:** PO Box 7533, Madison, WI 53707, dirtnaprecs.com
**Disgraceful:** disgraceful.bandcamp.com
**Doomrock:** doomrock.com
**Drivel Novelties:** drivelnovelties.com
**D-Takt & Råpunk:** dbeatrawpunk.blogspot.com
**Eccentric Pop:** eccentricpop.com
**Everyday Madness Everyday:** facebook.com/everydaymadnesseveryday
**Εξωτικός Παροξυσμός:** exotikosparoxysmos.tumblr.com
**First Humans:** bigbillband.com
**Flowerviolence Records:** flowerviolence.de
**Girth**:girthrecords.com
**Governess:** governessdc.bandcamp.com
**Halvfabrikat:** halvfabrikat.net
**Happy Wolves:** happywolves.com.au
**Hysterical:** instinto.bandcamp.com
**Incredible Noise Records:** incredible-noise.de
**In the Red:** intheredrecords.com
**Jerkoff:** jerkoffrecords.com
**Kick Rock:** kickrock.org
**Lou & Rocked Boys:** lourockedboys.pl
**Maldita Cruz:** malditacruz.blogspot.com
**Mangrove:** ACP Bldg 3F, 4-23-5 Koenji Minami, Suginami-Ku Tokyo, JAPAN 166-0003, recordshopbase.com
**Nada Nada:** nadanadadiscos.com
**Neanderthal Stench:** neanderthalstench.tumblr.com
**Necros:** necrosrecords.bandcamp.com
**Night Animal:** nightanimalrecords.storenvy.com
**Not For Profit:** notforprofitrecords.com; notforprofitrecords@gmail.com, (210) 845-2338
**One Percent Press:** PO Box 279, Buffalo, NY 14213-0279, onepercentpress.com
**Party Product:** partyproductrecords.bigcartel.com
**Phobia:** phobiarecords.net
**Profane Existence:** profanexistence.com
**Punk Shop:** punkshop.pl
**Queen Mum:** queenmumrecords.co.uk
**Rad Girlfriend:** radgirlfriendrecords.storenvy.com
**Randy:** randyrecords.bigcartel.com
**Ratgirl:**ratgirlrecords.storenvy.com
**Refuse:** refusemusic.net
**Replenish:** replenishrecords.com
**Repression 24 Horas:** repression24horas@gmail.com, speedcityrecords.com
**Sabotage:** sabotagerecords.net
**Sacred Bones:** info@sacredbones.com, sacredbones.com
**Secret Mission:** secretmissionrecords.com, secretmissionrecords@gmail.com
**Sengaja:** sengajarecords.bandcamp.com
**Slug Salt:** slugsaltrex@gmail.com, slugsaltrex.com
**Snappy Little Numbers:** snappylittlenumbers.blogspot.com
**Snatchee:** 2 S Emerson Ave, Wenatchee, WA
**Sophomore Lounge:** PO Box 8, Jeffersonville, IN 47131,sophomorelounge.com, sophomorelounge@gmail.com, (502) 500-1953
**Speed City:** 294 Springback Drive, London, Ontario Canada N6J 1E9
**Static Age:** staticshockmusik.com
**Stonehenge:** BP 80824, 31008 Toulouse Cedex 6, FRANCE, stonehengerecords.com
**Superior Viaduct:** PO Box 193563, San Francisco, CA 94119, superiorviaduct.com
**Svoboda:** svoboda-records.com
**Taiyo:** taiyorecords.net
**Teen Wolf:** teenwolfrecords.com
**Timid Crusher:** https://songsforsnakes.bandcamp.com
**To Live A Lie:** tolivealie.com
**Total Punk:** floridasdying.com
**Vinyl Conflict:** vinylconflict.com/site/label
**Volar:** volarrecords.com
**Warsaw Pact:** warsawpact.bandcamp.com
**Weirdly:** weirdlyrecords.net
**What's for Breakfast?:** wfbr.storenvy.com
**World Gone Mad:** worldgonemad.bigcartel.com

CONTACTS
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# DEMOS

All cassettes and CD-Rs are reviewed in this section. Send yours to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA and include your contact information. Submissions without artwork will not be considered.

(AT) Alex Turner
(BP) Ben Paulson
(CP) Colin Peden
(GH) Greg Harvester
(HB) Heather Blotto
(JB) Julia Booz
(JR) Jason Ryan
(LB) Lourdes June Benavente
(MA) Matt Badenhop
(MD) Michael de Toffoli
(ML) Mike Leslie
(MR) Matt Reynolds

**ANIMAL TRAIN** – *Novo* – From the top this Austin band chugs out a mid-tempo NAUSEA-sounding track that doesn't hold my attention much. The next couple pick up a bit more and have more of a dour, gritty and melodic thing going on like HARUM SCARUM. Vocals are sharp and doubled up and clearly understood. Recording is a bit flat but the songs are pretty good. (MA) (3-song CD-R, lyrics not included, animaltrain.bandcamp.com)

**BIG PUPPY / PLASTISOL** – BIG PUPPY is hardcore and punk music. It follows a basic formula for those genres and does it well. Vocals are pissed and use a familiar hardcore inflection. Music is gritty and fast. They got some breakdowns here and there. It's pretty alright. PLASTISOL is punk / hardcore / experimental. This recording is gritty as hell. Is it live? For how wild and nasty the songs are, they are danceable. Talky-staccato vocals over disconnected, messy instruments. Worth checking out live, I bet. (LB) (9-song cassette, lyrics for BIG PUPPY included, bananasplitrecords.bandcamp.com)

**CAYETANA** – *New Kind of Normal* – To get it out of the way, fans of PS ELIOT and HOP ALONG take notice. This tape is beautiful. Having heard this band before, I was stoked to hear that they found their own unique way among similar bands. The bass shreds the whole way through. Don't be thrown off by the sick disco beat in track one. I mean, yeah, some songs will make you wanna dance, but some of this shit is a direct shot to your emotions. The lead vocals use this inflection that reminds me of explaining hurt or struggle through tears. It sounds like pain and passion and it is relatable as fuck. I would love to see these songs performed live to hear it all in a more raw form. This album is almost too pretty. (LB) (12-song cassette, lyrics included, cayetana.bandcamp.com)

**CHAIN CULT** – *Demo 2018* – CHAIN CULT hails from Athens, Greece and plays dark post-punk. Despite some of the hallmark post-punk sounds present, it is still very punk, which I really appreciate. The reverbed tone and some of the guitar work bring SPECTRES and SECT to mind, while the more driving and melodic moments remind me of the ESTRANGED, NEW MODEL ARMY or even RED DONS. The vocals vary between shouted, aggressive moments and more catchy, melodic moments. Although this demo is one of many newer post-punk bands, a lot of the songwriting and melodies really help CHAIN CULT stand out. While comparable to their contemporaries, CHAIN CULT weaves in different elements that keep things interesting. This demo is dark, melodic and catchy and I enjoyed it a lot. Check it out! (BP) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, chaincult.bandcamp.com)

**CIBORGUE** – *Liberdade Vigiada* – The first time I listened to this cassette, my partner asked me to change it because it was giving her "anxiety sweats." I will admit that it is some claustrophobic, clangorous, damaged shit. On "Problema Número 09," what sounds like bass guitar riffs are overlaid with some rocket launch found footage, and the song dies in the wake of the rocket's blasting jets. Occasionally an identifiable (bass) guitar is plugged in and strummed, I think on "Boneyard," which has a sort of minimalist death rock vibe to it, with distant, buried vocals and samples appearing, as if fetid bubbles of information rising to the surface. Seems like CIBORGUE is serenading our half human / half feedback mecha-dystopian present. Side B has two songs, one an almost ten-minute ambient piece, the other ("Liberdade Vigiade," the title track) a minute of processed screaming, the almost human cyborg asserting its near humanity. (CP) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, Victor S. R. Alvaro Ramos, 319 AP 106 Rio Dr Janeiro, RJ 22280-110)

**CRUNCHCOAT** – *Obsolete* – This self-released cassette is downright infectious. With six songs, none longer than three minutes, they waste no time getting down with some poppy jams. Lots of Hot Topic ennui, like with the mall food court relationship vibes of "Still." There's an ode to the month of November, asking the question "why it can't always be November?" with a cool guitar arpeggio tugging at those words. With a driving guitar line, Danny Bailey tells us on the closer "Homesick" that she still dreams of California, and she has certainly brought the Bay Area's pop punk sensibilities to Maine with this release. The cover has a pen and ink drawing of VHS cassettes, calculators, floppy disks, and analog cameras, if you were wondering what the title was referring to. (CP) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, crunchcoat.bandcamp.com)

**DELTOIDS** – Looking for a good time... call DELTOIDS! Great shit! The third track is what LEBENDEN TOTEN might sound like without the noise guitar. The other songs are good too, but "Pleasure" wins "most plays of the month." The overall sound is near perfection, though sometimes I wish bands would back off on the amount of reverb or echo used on vocals. If the vocals were more up front and engaging (the performance is on point though), this would be in Dangerhouse territory. Mandatory sounds from Berlin. (MA) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, deltoids.bandcamp.com)

**THE DUMPIES** – *Mark Spitz* – It is a little all over the place. Like maybe this is the tape of all those songs that didn't fit on all the other tapes? Some songs rule and are poppy and fun and you can dance to 'em, while others are more angry and messy, but maybe you can still dance. Some songs are short and seem real mad. I am real into the vocals on most tracks. Just when I think this band is gonna lose my interest, they swoop in with some cool hook or riff and I'm right back in it. This tape feels like an audition reel. Like the DUMPIES are all, "hey you, look at all this cool different shit we can do!" and I'm all "hell yeah, I'll go to your show." (LB) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, thedumpies.bandcamp.com)

**DUZZ** – *Flesh Costume* – These Olympia math rock duo punx are trying to get me seriously hooked with this aural candy. Chiming guitars and drumming deeply in the pocket means that this cassette reminds me of (too quickly gone) SF band CHURCHES. Mash POLVO and RODAN together and make it a two piece, and you might be getting somewhere. Maybe add some early Tim DeLaughter pretty TRIPPING DAISY psych sheen, and you'll see that this is some angular noise pop goodness. If you don't mind dancing to rhythms that aren't necessarily 4/4, this might be for you. A cassette with angular rhythms and crunchy guitars means that an album in part about gender dysphoria may have never sounded so good. *"This body is a threat, constructed in your head."* Fantastic and bears repeated listens. (CP) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, duzzmusic.bandcamp.com)

**HEAVY MEDZ** – Sounds like Spanish lyrics with a bit of an anglo accent from this muscular Chicago trio. I'd have liked a lyrics sheet to read along to. Some cool rhythms on this album, I particularly dig the drummer. Mostly medium tempo heavy punk, but there's enough fast shit (as on "La Paloma") to get you pogoing. "Vestido Matar" has a sick groove that reminds me a bit of UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE. (CP) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, americanheavymedicalassociation.bandcamp.com)

**HELLISH VIEW** – *Visions of Raw* –This is a D-beat tape from Minneapolis with the dense vocal execution of DISCARD *Death from Above*, a rough recording with shitloads of DISCLOSE noise and fuzz, at times submerging fully into burning static like an archaic phonograph. The kind of thing you really need to have turned up to fully appreciate. A collapsing storm of D-beat rain. Short, fast songs. Vocals remind me of APARTMENT 213 as well. Also, I'm way further invested in this by the fifth listen. That's something I always like about a recording, when it's eh at first, then grows on you. ANTI-CIMEX compositions, DISCHARGE compositions; check and check. There is something especially pulverizing about this that I don't want to put my finger on. It sounds mean as fuck. Seems to be in hot demand—good luck finding when this issue goes to print. (JR) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, desolaterecords.storenvy.com)

**HORRID** – *Fetishist* – Fucking awesome, disgusting, pungently popping death-pogo from BC. Fully ripping grotesque skull-stomping death punk. Two fucking members! Bass, drums. Sore defiling throat, and insane space throat. Get out from under your rock / shed / rotting porch and find this. You'll understand what I mean when you hear it. I just keep turning it up, this chucky bit of murky gut-blasting mess. Reminds me of YDINTUHO, SARCASM, ZOUO, and ELECTROCUTIONER. Whatever, you won't be disappointed, or clone bored Dis-anything for that matter! (JR) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, horrid.bandcamp.com)

**INEPSY** – *The Lost Tracks* – I had never heard INEPSY before, and though some might feel shame, regret, common embarrassment(?) at never hearing a well-known punk band, I took the opportunity to learn, grow and enjoy something new. I thought they might be a grind band, but I was surprised to find it a lot more coherent and JUDAS PRIEST influenced than I ever could imagine, with soaring solos and guitar flourishes to enjoy. The singer's voice is pretty nice, growly and yet clear. I really like the song "Nuclear Nightmare." The cassette itself has a cool sticker on it that encircles both the reels of the tape, giving it a real Halloween sound-effects tape kind of feeling. Can't understand how these tracks got lost, or what the word INEPSY is. Please write in if you know. (ML) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, runstatetapes.bandcamp.com)

**LANDOWNER** – *Impressive Almanac* – This tape has 8-bit artwork that in just a few concise frames takes us all the way to the ecological end times, tracing the line between warehouse and pit mine, sketching the outlines of commerce in between, in a cute montage as if you were playing it on an old school Nintendo console. The tape has repetitive krautrock sections and spasmodic hardcore ones, but all tie together in a claustrophobic narrative of our futures being sold out cheaply for profit. If you like taut, clean, repetitive guitar lines, then this is a really good cassette for you, and I recommend that you check it out. The lyrics sheet takes liberties, though, so I recommend that you listen along, read along, and get angry. (CP) (15-song cassette, lyrics included, landowner.bandcamp.com)

**LOOSE NUKES** – *Fast Forward to Extinction* – Tightly played hardcore from Houston with a pretty heavy BATTALION OF SAINTS meets POISON IDEA vibe. Rhythmic diversity plays a crucial role in setting LOOSE NUKES apart from many of their contemporaries. Closes with a KORO cover, to round out the '80s USHC homage. Great stuff. (MA) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, $5 ppd, 7614 Streamside Dr., Houston, TX 77088)

**THE MIDNIGHT VEIN** – John Toohill sent this in with a note specifying that it's not really "punk" music like his other main projects, RADIATION RISKS and ALPHA HOPPER. It's sort of a dark psychedelic album, with garage rock vibes and probably too much paisley fabric in its composition to be punk. Come on, long-hair, what're you trying to pull over on us here? Then when you read the lyrics sheet it's all deep bad vibes that show the rotting, cadaverous, all too final nature of this one-way hippy trip to the grave. OK John, whatever this is, it's dark and I dig it. (CP) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, themidnightvein.bandcamp.com)

**NARCOS FAMILY BAND** – *Pink Blues* – Definitely bluesy, kinda heavy, and a jamming feeling. A lot of players: J-card lists seven members, including keyboards and saxophone. The vocals are in a hardcore vein. The lyrics are included, but written wicked small on the color pink in the color pink! They do seem like a family. (ML) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, narcosrocknroll.bandcamp.com)

**NEGATIVE OPTION** – *Present Workers* – NEGATIVE OPTION plays angular and jarring post-punk that I imagine may use WIRE, GLAXON BABIES, and DEVO as a reference point. Lots of down-stroke, sporadic and single-note picking guitar-work, along with a more steady and driving rhythm section. The vocals are often the pretty monotone, loud-talking type, which isn't my personal favorite and can sometimes be a bit abrasive, but that may be the point. The lyrics aren't included, but from what I can gather from "Ghost Capital," the lyrics seem to be Marxist-leaning, which is cool. I really enjoyed several songs on this tape even though the vocals may have to grow on my a bit. This seems up the alley of folks who maybe enjoy URANIUM CLUB and RANK / XEROX. (BP) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, negativeoption.bandcamp.com)

**NO FUNERAL** – *Mankind is Carrion, Fit for Nothing* – This cassette EP contains two originals and an (uncredited) cover of BLACK FLAG's "My War." The Minneapolis, MN quartet delivers downtuned, somewhat bluesy sludge / doom with dual crust-inflected vocals. On the first track, "Carrion," the vocalists each take a turn with the verses, and then they do a call and response with the refrain "Mankind is carrion, fit for nothing." The second song, "Hyperalgesia" refers to an "opioid-induced abnormal pain sensitivity" that can develop in long-term opioid users (such as the chronically ill). (CP) (3-song cassette, lyrics included, nofuneralmpls.bandcamp.com)

**OUTTA GAS** – *Meet Me For A Drink* – Good fun-time punk rawk'n'roll that has a modest head on their shoulders and a cool demeanor. Showing the same confidence and power as

BAD SPORTS, OUTTA GAS manages to slip strong "coming of age" themes into the good time. I was surprised that they're from Brooklyn, because they have a lot of the same strengths of good Midwest indie punk bands, and the last sound on the tape is a good minor-key epiphany ring-out-chord. They'd fit the "last-week-of-school house party before you head off to college and the real world" bill. They strike me as the type of band that would be intimidating right away because they're very cool and down to earth, but then when they met you they'd be welcoming and genuine. (MD) (10-song cassette) (lyrics not included, outtagas.bandcamp.com)

**PARANOIA** – Two songs spread across two sides (a cassingle I would say). Pretty noisy though not all static, the singer sounds a lot like the guy from GISM. (ML) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, runstatetapes.bandcamp.com)

**POBREZA MENTAL** – This tape is absolutely fucking killer. Full disclosure, this demo made it into my year-end top ten list and I was very excited to see it end up in the demo box. POBREZA MENTAL plays dark and chaotic hardcore punk that often seamlessly transitions from brooding mid-tempo rhythms to blistering speed without blinking an eye. "No Se a Donde Voy" kicks off with a dark and menacing mid-tempo riff in the vein of RUDIMENTARY PENI, and by the end of the song, the fast-as-hell pace and ferocity brings classic Italian hardcore to mind (*à la* INDIGESTI). Singer David's agonized vocals add an additional layer of intensity and darkness to an already cacophonous sounding demo. I feel this is best captured in "No Se a Donde Voy" and "Pesadilla." The chorus of "Pesadilla" has gotten stuck in my head for days (*"es una pesadillaaaaaaa!!!"*). In a sea of often regurgitated approaches and sounds, POBREZA MENTAL really stands out to me as being different and thoughtful. This demo captures my complete attention each time. Do yourself a favor and check this out! (BP) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, pobrezamental.bandcamp.com)

**SADO BABIES** – *The Brood Session Demo* – Recorded in Boyle Heights, and with similar packaging to the WARTZ demo also reviewed in this issue, SADO BABIES are also similarly raw and awesome. They've got a couple "CA beach punk played by slimeballs" moments, but mostly sear through your skull with fast and abrasive fury, indirectly recalling the old *ADK Omnibus* comps. Only three songs on the tracklist, but this copy kept going on, likely repeating some songs. Definitely get it. (MA) (3?-song cassette, lyrics included, keepgrindpunk@yahoo.com)

**SEQET** – *Demo 2017* – Some of the more optimistically laced, alive and kicking goth rock I've heard lately. An unshaken and unsettling voice from Virginia. Think SIOUXSIE level abilities with effortless ennui and shadowy humility. Guitars dance like the CHAMELEONS, drums tribulate and rumble with organic reverberation. Ghastly chamber synths throughout. Feeling BLUE CROSS, DEKODER as well. "Garden of Badb" is my favorite song here. Furthermore, Badb of Irish mythology means crow, or goddess who takes the form of a crow, known as Badb Catha—battle crow. She is known to cause fear and confusion among soldiers, and move the tide of battle to her favor. This tape is in favor of a being a 2018 top ten and it's only February. A must have. (JR) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, serqet.bandcamp.com)

**SHITBLIMP** – *Cassingle* – Cleveland's PERVERTS AGAIN mentioned SHITBLIMP way back in *MRR* #416 as locals to see. Here's their tour cassette with art from Nathan Ward, who did the cover art for *MRR* #417. There's just 2:10 to get through the two songs of weird punk. Those 130 seconds manage to include samples and recorder and trombone (though decidedly not in any sort of a ska way), as well as a chant of *"Get a job, just a hobby."* I bet they're fun live. (CP) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, shitblimp.bandcamp.com)

**TANKINI** – *Do U Suk* – This tape is so good! Every part of it: artwork, jams, tape color. I just wish it was longer. It has a classic Olympia, WA guitar sound. The kind that makes me wanna conquer some hard shit. The tender and passionate vocals leave me thinking about old friendships, lost friendships, love stories good and bad, and the array of bullshit we must face on a daily basis. The first song is so insanely catchy it makes me wanna jump on the bed with my eyes closed. Check this out! Put out on Get Better Records. (LB) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, tankini.bandcamp.com)

**TEAR DUNGEON** – *Gory Hole* – Definitely blues-based here, especially in the chords, and some puckering riffs. The drums are blown out, which I enjoyed, and the first track, "Banananana," has a really interesting frog-voice part that sort of sounds like the singer is getting a neck massage. Unfortunately, this voice only appears one other time on this release. If I'm as tuned in as the next music listener to what is nice, TEAR DUNGEON, we want the frog voice. (ML) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, teardungeon.bandcamp.com)

**THROBBING CHAKRA** – *TXC* – Disorienting psychedelic punk from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This cassette has four interludes surrounding three full-length songs. "Bass Godz" has a really cool chopped up drum sound that opens into reverbed vocals with growling synthesizer underneath. "Black Hole" is 1:38 of quick, repetitive post-punk with chiming guitars and synths. "Primitive World" is an ecological ditty with pulsing repetitive negative vibes that breaks out into some synthesizer interludes. We're living in a primitive world, black smoke in the skies. Grimy little cassette that I'll be listening to more than once this year. (CP) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, throbbingchakra.bandcamp.com)

**WARTZ** – What!? "Recorded in...Boyle Heights" is my only clue here, so I guess these guys are from somewhere in LA. This tape sounds *awesome*. Back before everyone had access to digital recording programs (not necessarily a bad thing) many bands recorded demo tapes with cassette 4-track machines or boomboxes, and this tape totally has that feel. Stylistically, WARTZ covers ground from mid-tempo GERMS-like punk to ripping '80s hardcore punk, all of which is snarly as fuck. So great! Don't bother looking 'em up on the internet. Just flood the following email with order inquiries. (MA) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, dielaughing@yahoo.com)

**V/A** – *Super Quiet On The Eastern Front* – Truly deceptive name. Blown out grindcore blasts that are almost indecipherable... but leave you wanting more. Features no name bands such as HONDA CIVIC DISOBEDIENCE, DRY LUBE, SIXTEEN CROSSES TO BEAR, and 77 more bands... or more accurately "bands." Most surprising is the KLUMPS, who, in the only moment of total clarity on the tape, effortlessly cover the *Barney* theme song...or is it even a cover? If this is your steez then you're likely ordering it right now. (WN) (80-song cassette, lyrics not included, $5 ppd, 735 Ballard Drive, Melbourne, FL 32935)

# ZINES

Send zines for review to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA. Include postpaid price within the US and internationally. We are always looking for multi-lingual zine reviewers who are based in the US. Write to ari@maximumrocknroll.com for more information.

(AK) Arthur Katrina
(DG) Dan Goetz
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(ED) Evie Deller
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(GM) Gina Murrell
(JA) Joshua Kay
JD) Joan DeToro
(MF) Miranda Fisher
(RH) Ryan Hertel

**CHASING THE NIGHT #4**
**$3 / 62 pgs**
This is a tightly packed little gem, right here. Sometimes slightly serious speculations like the irony of those Safe Space signs that popped up all of the sudden, a sweet write-up on Fred Cole and a few perfectly sized book reviews are mixed in with reviews of movies all with someone named Julie in them, a rad and non-humorous review of a free hearing test facility, interviews with organizers of First 100 Days, and one incredibly hard to read, hand scrawled account of the total solar eclipse. There was a page here and there that I wasn't sure what the hell the point was, or if I just wasn't in on the joke, but it was all thought provoking in the end. Recommended as all get out. (DZ)
PO Box 1113 Portland, OR 97207 / pobox1113portlandor97207@gmail.com

**COOL HELL**
**15 pgs**
*Cool Hell* is a collection of someone (possibly named Jerry)'s song lyrics and poetry, centered around a pretty intense alienation from family and emotional life. Some of the writing is indeed cool and hellish, and some of it so overtly dark and tortured that the message falls flat. There's some eerie photos and sketches of faces from this person's life. I like how whole poems or segments of poems will just be crossed out, but I think *Cool Hell* could benefit from providing any context at all, or at least just a level of aesthetic organization for a reader to not get too lost looking at it. But that could be the point. (GJ)
No contact info included

**CRETINS OF DISTORTION #10**
**$7 / 12 pgs**
Say it ain't so! Is this the final issue of *Cretins*? Emmy spends the first several pages detailing why they no longer wish to continue publishing their fantastic zine. Some of the criticisms they give are general rants against "punk," in particular their idea of punk as merely a *pyrrhic* victory, successful only within itself as a subculture, but meaning fuck all outside of it (and potentially, Emmy argues, to the individual punk). They also give more specific criticisms: they feel as though their zine became a cool guide for punks looking to make a profit off of other people's labor (and specifically mentions Neck Chop Records as a culprit), and that punk often maintains white supremacy (*extremely true*). The rest of the zine includes a goofy interview with artist and Warm Bodies and BB Eye frontwoman Olivia Gibb, who discusses her artwork and TV, as well as a comprehensive new rating of every release—covering 159 bands—they reviewed in *Cretins* (spoiler alert: the *Ooze* EP gets the highest rating). Also included is a flexi featuring songs from Lumpy & the Dumpers, Uranium Club, and what I believe to be some Mark Winter project. There's also a (sadly) out of print version of this that included a fake *33 1/3* of Electric Eels' "Bunnies / Spin Age Blasters" 7" consisting almost entirely of drawings of bunnies, as well as a sticker of an incredible John Brannon tweet. This is an excellent send off to a zine that has, even with this issue, always made me want to do my own zine to focus on the music that matters to me. That I still feel the same way while at the helm of *Maximum* is a testament to Emmy's ability. (JD)
loathedsound.com

**DISTORT #51–52**
**$5.50 / 22 pgs / 18 pgs / 12 pgs**
The two latest issues of Australia's always excellent *Distort* are only available as a threefer bundle focusing exclusively on artists in different cities in Australia. Issue 51, subtitled *Distort Melbourne #3* is an extended interview with artist Jim McCullough, who beyond doing abstract art also has performed in many bands over the years including Civic, Frantics, Brown Hair, and Leather Lickers. In a rather speedy yet entertaining interview, McCullough details his artistic evolution from graffiti artist to abstract aficionado as well as some his experiences with punk. Issue 52.1 is *Distort Sydney* and overall is a more mixed bag, featuring interviews with members of Orion, Royal Headache, Crime Spree, Nasho, Fatalias, and BB & the Blips. Many of these interviews are brief glimpses into their lives and the way that Sydney has affected them directly. The most interesting ones to this reviewer are Shogun (from Royal Headache) who is totally wild during their interview, and Bryony Beynon (from Nasho, Fatalias, and BB & the Blips), who discusses her move to Sydney and her experiences an immigrant there. *Distort QLD*, issue 52.2, focuses on Brisbane and is much shorter and features interviews with Comrad Xero (formerly of the band Zero), Pious Faults, and Sex Drive, as well as a conversation between Lena Molnar and Andrew McLennan. Most of these pieces are brief but remain informative and interesting. The real winner here is Molnar and McLennan's chat about punk in Brisbane. With these issues, *Distort* remains one of the most interesting and eclectic music zines outside of the US. Don't miss it. (JD)
distortmag.bigcartel.com

**DYNAMITE HEMORRHAGE #5**
**$5 / 44 pages**
Issue five, but the second to utilize the more stripped-down ½ size format that helps this zine be quarterly-ish rather than every year plus-ish. Jumps right in with the first page being a review of a recent Amos and Sara (great early '80s UK DIY / post-punk weirdos) reissue and Mosquitoes (current UK DIY/post-punk dub mysterios) 12" and live set recording. Interviews with Maxine Funke, Edible Arrangements (RIP), and Nick Schultz / Majora Records (actually a reprint of a

thorough 1999 interview, 2017 follow up and complete discography of the label). Extensive pages dedicated to the minutiae of a record label twenty years dead not enough for you? Want another example of riffing on punk yore without getting stuck in the borezone? "10 Parallel World Punk-Era Singles," a what if for singles that would be too good for this planet (Screamers, Tracey / Janet-period Red Cross). Interesting stuff from today, the last few years, and decades ago fits side by side and enhances each other the same way they would / should in your record collection. More record reviews placed throughout the issue with a special section for dub and a brief interview-ette snuck into the World of Pooh Reissue review. I appreciate all that Jay does, and I think you should read his zine as well. (JA)
523 Mangels Avenue San Francisco CA 94127 / dynamite@outlook.com / dynamitehemorrhage.com

**EGON FOREVER!YONE**
**$.25 / 16 pgs**
A "mindfully translated," grandly introduced, glossy new English-language edition of a comic strip made by a pre-teen in math class in the Black Forest of Germany in 1994! Stick figures, "random." I can only describe this as "very European," with abstract jokes about Swedish intergenerational miscommunication, ska bands, etc. Low-flying jokes partially redeemed by the fact that this document was made by a child twenty years ago... (What's your excuse?) For fans of *Super Happy Anarcho Fun Pages, Calvin and Hobbes, Nothing Nice to Say*. I love that it only costs 25 cents, that's like playing a five minute set, no big deal. The artist is now an adult who lives with his girlfriend near the football stadium who is involved in DIY record labels and releasing music fanzines. (AK)
foreveregon@yahoo.de / egonforever.de

**ENZK #11**
**£2.63 / 20 pgs**
I love it when things get weirder the closer I look. At first glance, this appears to be a really good first effort: mega-crammed with loosely punk-based comics; goofy screenshots; a small, killer reviews page; and slightly funny, typed wordplay slapped on every available square inch. The handful of band interviews have little or no meat on them, but it seems sincere, so who cares, right? Here's the kicker for me, though. This zine has apparently been running since 1989! Obviously, there are huge gaps between issues, with a few allegedly just being a sheet of reviews and maybe a foray into the blog-ness. They even have an Angelfire webpage! So rad and strange, I love it. Interviews with Bratakus, Tragical History Tour, Gay Panic Defense, Last Climb, Get It Together. Seriously, though, the band interviews were boring, but I say that all the goddamn time. Don't take it personally. (DZ)
Graham 93 Craigard Rd, Dundee, DD2 4PU / condition21@hotmail.com / angelfire.com/wi/enzk

**EXPEDITE DEATH Vol. 5**
**$7 / 28 pgs**
For consisting solely of five emailed interviews, this crust-leaning zine is pretty to look at, fun to read, and deceptively big. The variety of the interviews and the humor, intentional and not, make it totally worth your time to pick this up. You'll read the whole thing without stopping. The five interviews are Kenichi from SDS (Japan), Instinct of Survival (Germany), God Fearing Fucks (Texas), Nuclear Death Terror (Denmark / Australia), and Mareridt (Denmark). I could not stop laughing at the unintentional comedy of the email interview format brought out in the NDT interview when several questions about Denmark were answered to the tune of "I haven't lived in Denmark in ten years, but it's cool. Anyway, the answer to your question but about Australia instead is..." I'm also a big VHS guy, so the text that really looks like the text from an old home VHS editing machine covering all of the pages made me happy. The bonus SDS poster and the reproduction of an old SDS European tour flyer are pretty awesome too. The effort put in to make this zine so high quality makes it worth checking out. (RH)
expeditedeath@hotmail.com / expeditedeath.bigcartel.com

**MY LEFT FOOT #1**
**$2 / 8 pgs**
One day, while walking around the garage, polianarchy "tripped over a pile of my landlord's junk" and broke the metatarsal in her left foot. Her perzine *My Left Foot* relays her experience recovering from this injury—a six-month-long journey traveled by walker, wheelchair, crutches and, ultimately, a cane. Recalling the isolation of her recuperation, polianarchy says she was "lonely, bored." She also laments that she "had more out-of-town friends visit me while laid up with a broken foot than locals." She then rattles off a list of friends who "went above and beyond to help me out" before delving deep into introspection about being "a clingy codependent." Brutally honest and sometimes heartbreaking, *My Left Foot* leaves an impression. (GM)
bibliophiliac.bigcartel.com/contact

**PICKING STUFF APART #1**
**$4 / 50 pgs**
*Picking Stuff Apart* is a collaborative zine by Craven Rock and Joshua James Amberson. The longtime friends "assigned each other things to watch, read, listen to, or go to." They'd "write tangential reviews of the experiences and then have conversations about them and then make a zine out of the results." The zine, *Picking Stuff Apart,* features Amberson's reviews of Grant Morrison's "Pop Magic!" essay, episode 49 of the Christian television show *Fire by Nite*, etc., and Rock's reviews of Alak's EP *I Don't Feel Anything*, Joe Meno's novel *Marvel and a Wonder*, and more. Rock and Amberson's intellectually rigorous post-review conversations in *Picking Stuff Apart* will have you piecing together your own opinions. (GM)
eavesofass@yahoo.com

**PLAIN WORDS #4**
**Free / 16 pgs**
A short and intense read! Thoughtful, impactful words, recounts, and requiems. Great layout, excellent premise. A welcome breath of life into the heavy reality of combative rebellion that has been diluted by boring anarchists with trash politics and bad writing. This is not a new era in the universe of anarchist publications. This is to say: if you are new to this kind of publication, you have a lot to read! And lucky for you, the gems abound, like this one. Dig a little deeper at the distro table, follow the threads, be guided by the heart of what is said and resaid about total freedom. Learn the names of those discussed here. The prisoners of the wars against what threatens the uncaged life. Then learn the names of their friends, of those who came before them, and those before them. Seek what strengthens your resolutions about prison abolition, about affinity, about attack. Leave what doesn't resonate with you and you'll still find whole galaxies of imagination, conflictual commitment, and absolute refusal to be swallowed by casual, popular anarchism. These are the words of the deadly serious. These are the deeds of the determined. These are the dreams of the dead returned to inhabit the spirit of living as we know it, refuse to forget it, and vividly remember it. To whatever is happening in Indiana, to those cradling the seed, to the ghosts who bless the visions and direct actions of these midwestern rebels, thank you. (ED)
plainwordsbloomington@riseup.net / plainwordsbloomington.org

**RAZORCAKE #102**
**$4 / 112 pgs**
Fatty Cakes and the Puff Pastries are a five-member, "all-grrrl band from Fresno." Admittedly, I hadn't heard of Fatty Cakes and the Puff

Pastries until I saw an 11-page interview with the band in the February / March 2018 *Razorcake*. That *Razorcake* dedicated so much space to an all-femme band that performs songs against racism, fatphobia, sexism, and homophobia speaks volumes about its dedication to amplify "unheard voices." Other substantial interviews in this issue are with Dave Dictor (MDC), Mike and Jim Blaha (the Blind Shake), and Dean Beddis (Cowboy Killers, Bad Sam). These features, along with a comic by MariNaomi, a column on punk parenting by Jennifer Whiteford, and much more, make *Razorcake* another required read. (GM)
razorcake.org

**TANDEM #4**
**42 pgs**
This zine out of Qatar packs a ton into what feels like *way* more than 42 pages. Interviews with numerous bands of mostly, but not exclusively, the punx'n'skins varieties, including Defectives, Wizards of Oi, and Crown Court. Notable non-bands are interviewed as well, such as No Front Teeth Records, *Real Enemy* zine, the person behind the Punker TV online archive of live footage, Ted Rall, and even one person who is interviewed just as Randall the punk. Most of the interviews ask fairly straightforward questions (several bands get asked "why is that your name?"), but are still enjoyable enough to read. Some of the record reviews (Rancid?) and ads (Victory, complete with PR essay?) at the end of the zine do make me raise an eyebrow, though. The layout is fairly utilitarian and text-heavy, but the photos are well-reproduced. (DG)
Tandem Zine c/o Ferdinand N. Lindayen, PO Box 3050, Heart Hospital-HMC, Doha, Qatar

**#TEAMSWAMI ZINE VOL 1**
**$7 / 12 pgs**
*#Teamswami* is a zine and hashtag for fans of "Swami," aka John Reis. I didn't know who this dude was before doing some research, but he seems to be an idol for lovers of that kind of goofy guy-tiki-'90s Southern California rock scene. *#Teamswami* has some brief stories of people's experiences getting into Rocket from the Crypt, Drive Like Jehu, Hot Snakes, etc. and all the people they met through this passion. The zine definitely feels like a first draft. But seems like even now there's a pretty robust community of fans from all over the world, so, If you're part of it check this out. (GJ)
polianarchy@yahoo.com / bibliophiliac.bigcartel.com

**TOINEN VAIHTOEHTO #259**
**€3.34 / 32 pgs**
This zine is in Finnish, and I don't know Finnish, which hampers my enjoyment of it for sure. I can tell you that it looks to be quite nicely done: there's a sense of care and aesthetic to the layout without appearing overly polished, and the numerous reviews are lengthy enough that it seems like the writers really have something to say, which is great. There are a few interviews as well. I'm sure it's something I'd be very interested in reading if I could understand it, but unfortunately, I don't. (MF)
PL 25, 37501 Lempäälä, Finland

**TRUST #187**
**€3 / 68 pgs**
*Trust* is a super nice-looking, lengthy zine that I unfortunately mostly cannot understand because it's in German. However, for whatever reason, there are also a handful of zine and book reviews in English. I found that some of them offered useful perspectives on the merits and downfalls of the material being reviewed, while others read more as just a summary of what was covered; I definitely prefer the former approach. Interestingly enough, in one of the reviews, the writer states that the book in question "was not my cup of tea, because I rather read facts instead of review-like drivel." I guess I might prefer review-like drivel! The bits in English did make me wonder what the German-language parts of the text were like, though. I love the design, so maybe it's time to start learning German. (MF)
Postfach 11 07 62, 28087 Bremen, Germany

**VALOTUS #4**
**€3 / 40 pgs**
This pictures-only zine is beautiful. You get 40 pages of pictures from three Finnish punk festivals from Summer 2017: Ketolaikka, Hässäkkä-päivät, and Puntala-Rock. There are no titles, no explanations, and no page numbers. It's just wall-to-wall wonderful pictures of punks in their natural habitat. What makes this a worthwhile pickup is the quality and care taken in the editing and printing process to ensure the pictures are clear and perfect. This will fit right in added to the art section or your personal library / pile of bound, paper media. (RH)
avzine.bigcartel.com / valotuszine.blogspot.com

# SCENIC

NEW YORK CITY

**MIKEY ERG / THE SLOW DEATH**
**NERVOUS TRIGGERS / HEADLINES**
MARCH 9 @ THE SAFARI ROOM AT EL CORTEZ

**THE PILFERS**
FULL WATTS BAND / REGGAY LORDS / LOVE ALWAYS / TYPHOID ROSIE
MARCH 9 @ BROOKLYN BAZAAR, ALL AGES

**CONTINENTAL**
BIKINI CARWASH / THE FLUX MACHINE
MARCH 12 @ THE SAFARI ROOM AT EL CORTEZ

**THE GENERATORS**
RATAS EN ZELO
MARCH 16 @ THE SAFARI ROOM AT EL CORTEZ

**MURPHY'S LAW**
MORAL PANIC / RUNNY
MARCH 17 @ BROOKLYN BAZAAR, ALL AGES

**WOLFMANHATTAN PROJECT**
ART GRAY NOIZZ QUINTET / ROBERT KENNEDY ASSASSINATION
MARCH 22 @ THE SAFARI ROOM AT EL CORTEZ

**WRECKLESS ERIC**
MAY 3 @ BERLIN NYC

**HUB CITY STOMPERS / NO REDEEMING SOCIAL VALUE**
THE LADRONES / NONE ABOVE ALL
MAY 12 @ THE SAFARI ROOM AT EL CORTEZ

**THE PROLETARIAT**
MAY 18 @ THE SAFARI ROOM AT EL CORTEZ

**TSUNAMI BOMB**
TRASHY / FAT HEAVEN
MAY 19 @ THE SAFARI ROOM AT EL CORTEZ

**NERVOUS EATERS**
METALLEG
JUNE 2 @ THE SAFARI ROOM AT EL CORTEZ

**CHARGED GBH**
PIÑATA PROTEST / THE MINUTES
JUNE 21 @ BROOKLYN BAZAAR, ALL AGES

# EVER/NEVER RECORDS

How To Be Au Courant In These Confusing & Modern Times

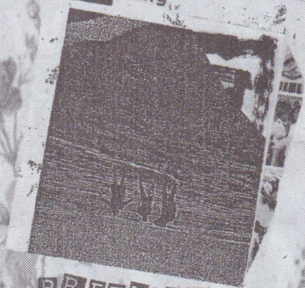
Dan Melchior
ROAD NOT DRIVING
12" EP

Sparrow Steeple
A Aardvark
12" EP

Obnox
Murder Radio
LP

GAD WHIP
In A Room
12" EP

EN KERNAGHAN
Divine Body Care
7"




PREENING
Greasetrap Frisbee
7"

https://evernever-records.bandcamp.com/

# SAY NO

To corporations!
To tyranny!
To control!
To hegemony!
To monopolies!

The big streaming companies now control the way most people access music. They are the major labels of today's music industry and they alone determine who will succeed and who will languish in obscurity.

**THESE ARE YOUR GODS NOW**

bandcamp

★REVERBNATION

YouTube

**WILL YOU OVERTHROW THEM?**

## WE MUST FIGHT BACK

Starting April 1, 2018, MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL will no long review ANY artist who promotes their music via streaming media. Including YOU!

# DO DIY YOURSELVES